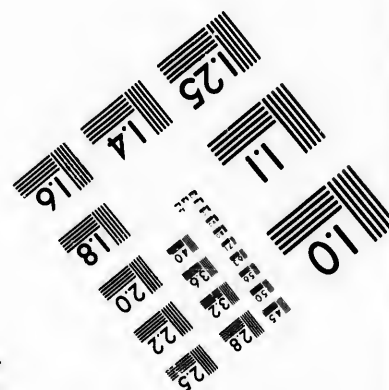
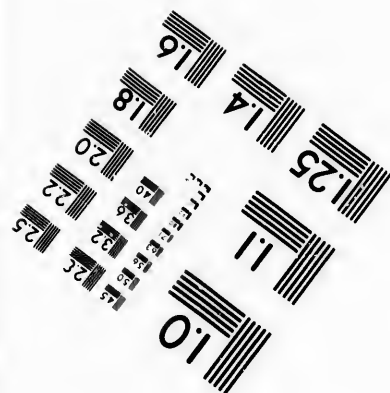
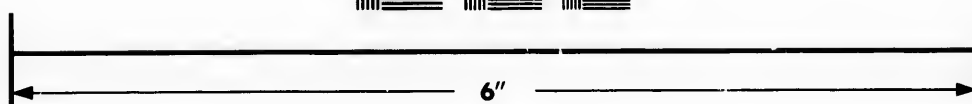
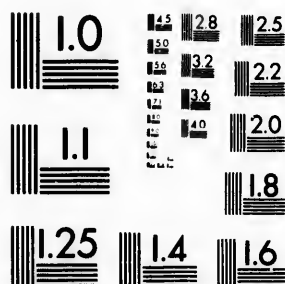


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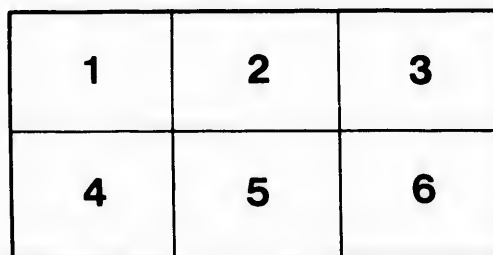
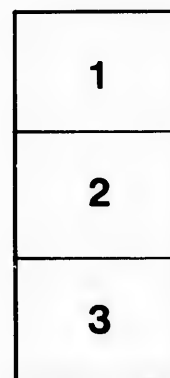
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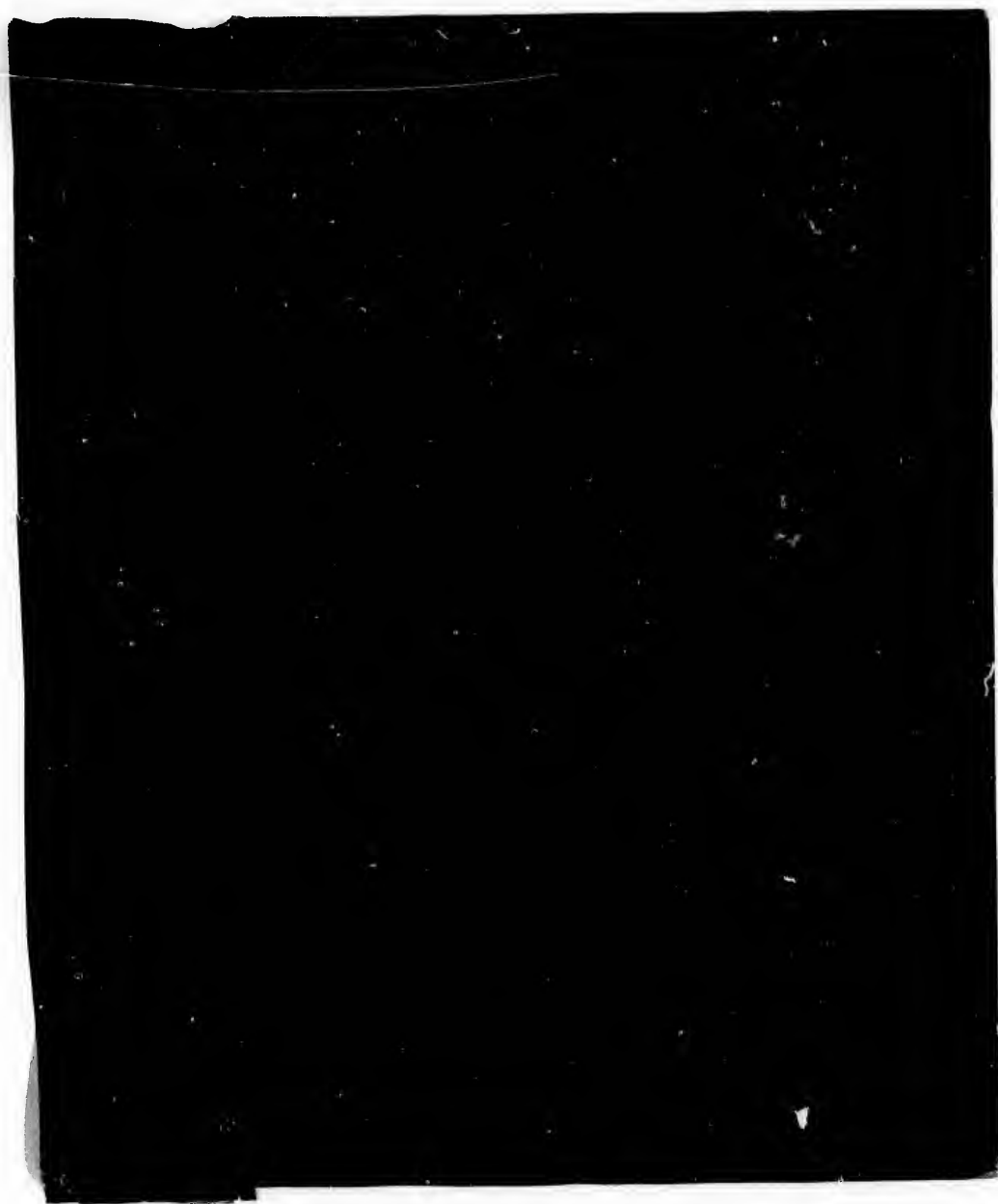
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AS I WADED INTO THE WATER I SIGNALLED TO THOSE ON THE
GALLEY NEAREST ME.—Page 26.

A TRAITOR'S ESCAPE.

A Story of the Attempt to Seize Benedict
Arnold After He Had Fled to
New York.

By JAMES OTIS.



WITH EIGHT PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE G. WHITE.

NEW YORK:
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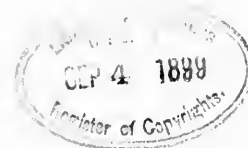
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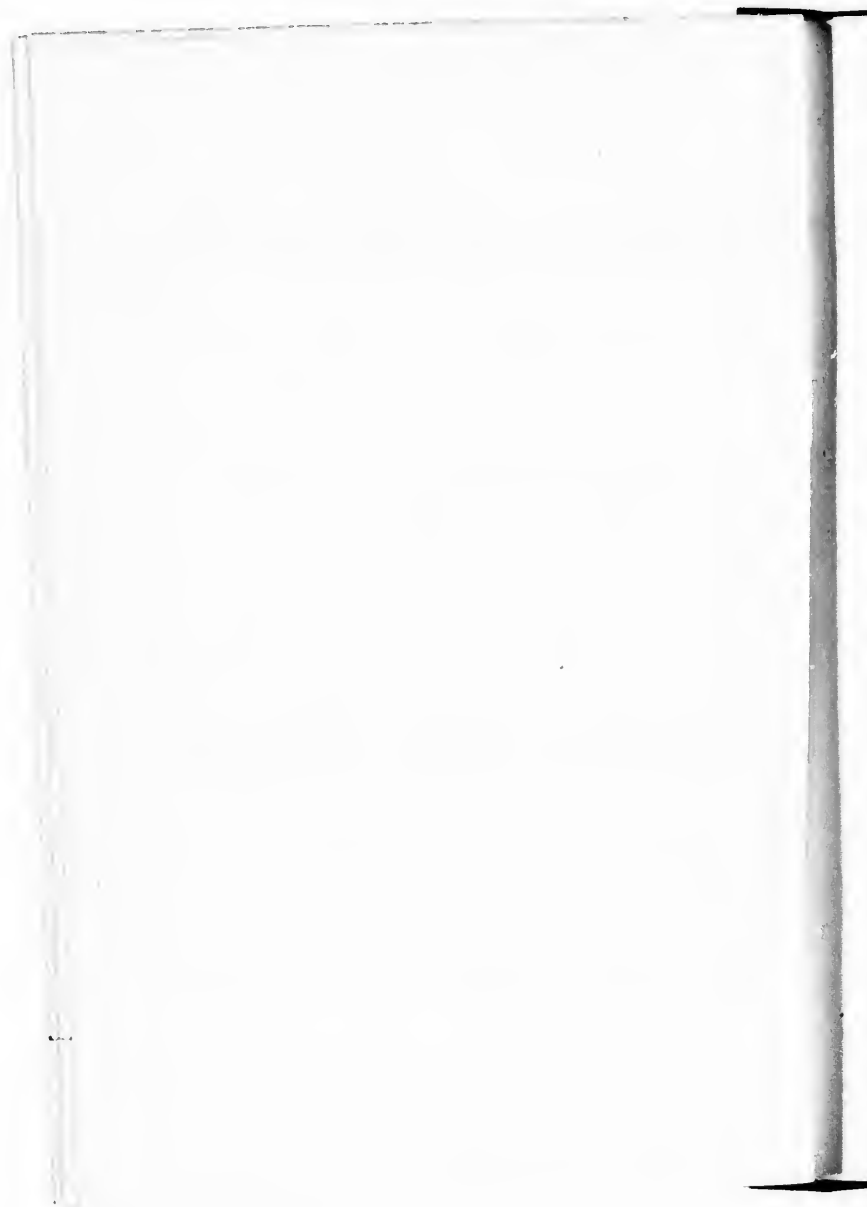
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EXPLANATION.

SUCH credit as may attach to this story of the unsuccessful attempt to capture Benedict Arnold should be given to the lad concerned in the plot, rather than to him whose name appears on the title-page.

In a general way Oliver Littlefield is the author of the tale, since his account, written early in the year 1778, is given with but little change of text, and only a slight rearrangement of details.

JAMES OTIS.



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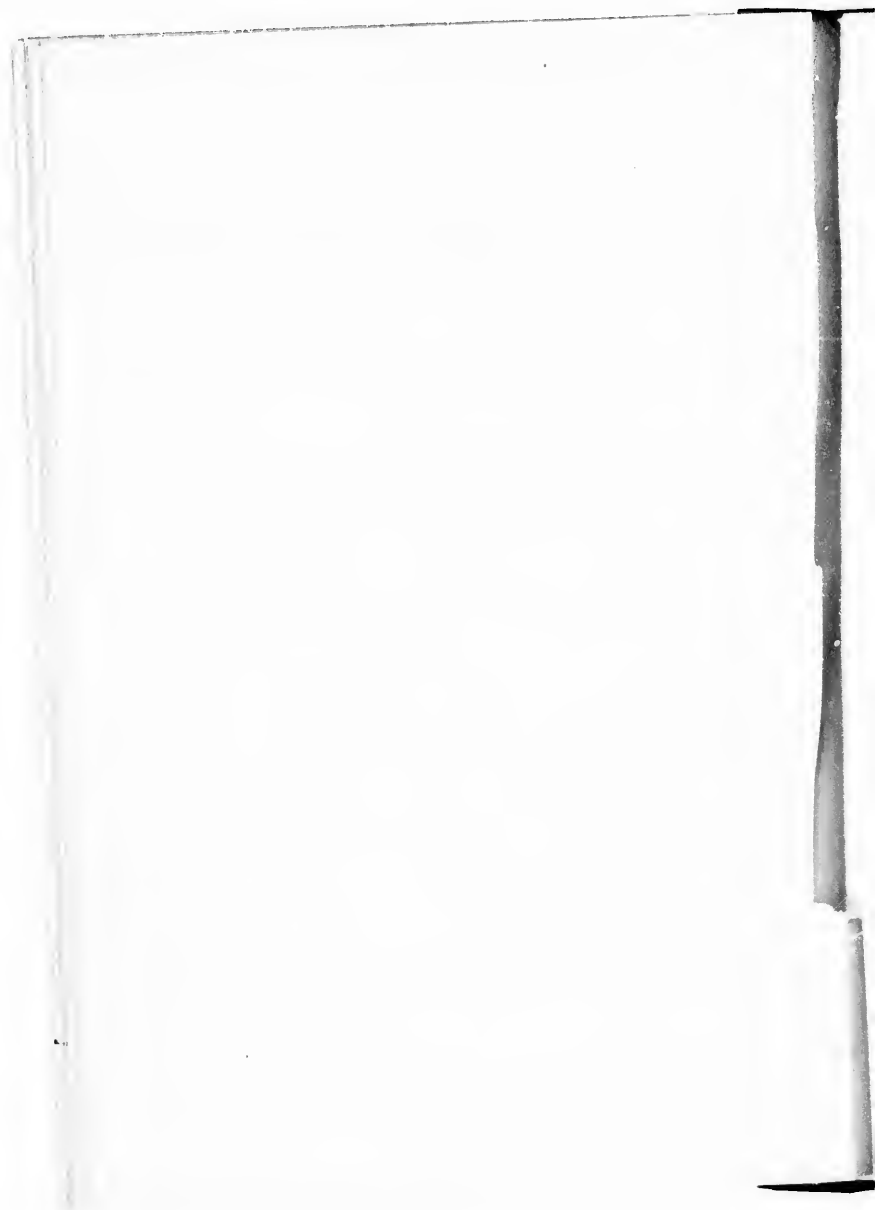
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A TRAITOR'S ESCAPE.

CHAPTER I.

A DANGEROUS PLAN.

ALTHOUGH I have passed through the trou-
blous time when we braved King George, ay,
and bested him too, I never heard of, or took
part in any more perilous venture than that
when I enlisted in the plot to capture the
traitor Arnold while he was in this city of New
York holding the king's commission, and mak-
ing ready his expedition to the south from
which so much was expected and so little
realized.

The story is worth the telling, even though
the attempt was a failure, for in it was con-

cerned as brave a man and gallant a soldier as it was ever my good fortune to meet.

There is no reason, however, why I should jump into the tale in such hap-hazard fashion; it should be told in an orderly manner for its better understanding.

In the fall of 1780 I was a stripling of seventeen years, believing myself already a man, and chafing much because my good mother had her heart so set against my joining the "rebel" army.

We, my mother and I, lived on George Street hard by the highroad to Boston, and in Duke Street, just off Frankford, David Rhineland, my particular comrade, who was about my own age, made his home.

He, as well as I, was the only child of a widowed mother, and our fathers had fallen gloriously, fighting for the colonies at Trenton in the province of New Jersey, in January of '77.

Because our lives so nearly resembled each

other, and because David was a lad who could be trusted through evil as well as fair days, we became such firm friends that the neighbors spoke of us as comrades, and the Tories never mentioned our names without adding that we should be hanged for what we had been able to do toward aiding the cause.

More than once had we carried valuable information to those who were fighting against the king, and no less an officer than General Sullivan himself was pleased to say to our faces that we were of more service to him in New York City than we could have been in the ranks, which I considered a great compliment, although envious lads, to whom we repeated the words, insisted it was but another way of telling us the army was better off for not having us in it.

All this I set down that it may be understood how we, who were of no importance as citizens, save in our own estimation, should

have been the ones selected to aid a brave man in a plot which, had it succeeded, would have brought great renown to all concerned.

As a matter of course we, meaning David and I, had heard the news when Major John André, adjutant-general of the king's forces in New York, was made a prisoner; of Benedict Arnold's treason, and later of André's execution.

On the 24th of September in the year 1780, we had the first information, less than eighteen hours after the major was captured, and two days later we saw the arch traitor, Benedict Arnold, walking through the streets of the city, he having fled on the 25th.

It can well be fancied that we did little else than converse on this subject, which was in the mouths of all the citizens whether they favored the Continentals, or the king, and David declared more than once that we would be justified in shooting Arnold as we would a pole-cat.

And we were in the temper to do such a rash thing, had it not been for the fact that his death would hardly serve to right the wrong, and also that of a certainty we should have been hanged offhand, for the traitor was under the protection of Sir Henry Clinton in fact, he had taken up his quarters in the house adjoining the building occupied by that nobleman.

It would appear as if I had set down many words that might well have been left out; yet it seems to me, and also to David, who is even now overlooking the task, as if each one is necessary for the proper telling of the story.

It was just five weeks from the day Arnold, the traitor, entered the city, that David and I, returning home from a stroll to Bowling Green, met that good patriot, Jacob Schuster, who was my comrade's uncle on his mother's side, she having been one of the Schusters from Bergen before marrying Frederick Rhineland.

The night was just coming on, and we were

quickenings our steps lest we be overhauled by the patrol, and were not minded to linger any longer than was necessary to greet Master Schuster in respectful fashion, when he said in a cautious tone, so unusual with him, that our curiosity was quickened at once :

"I would have speech with you, lads, and in private, on a weighty matter. If it so be you can come to the sign of the Black Horse in half an hour, I will have ordered a lunch spread for the three of us."

The tavern he spoke of was where the post-stage from Boston put up, and we should have been well pleased to go there under any pretext, for much was always doing at the inn, and gossip was plenty as fleas on a cur.

"We will be there, Master Schuster," I said boldly ; "but first it is right our mothers should be made acquainted with the favor you propose doing us."

"It is well to remember the mother, Oliver

Littlefield, and a credit that you think of her first. Step quickly, so that I am not kept waiting."

We needed no urging to make all possible haste; for to partake of food at the sign of the Black Horse was much more of an entertainment than it is now, when the tavern has fallen into bad repute.

We two were excited by the invitation and the mysterious air which Master Schuster wore while giving it, and speculated as to its meaning while we hurried homeward, but without solving the riddle; for it surely was a riddle when David's uncle was willing to spend good money without seeing an immediate return, with ample profit from the investment.

Of course we understood it had to do with the cause, and I declared my belief that we were about to be allowed to enlist; but this hope David soon dashed, when he said:

"If such had been the business Uncle Jacob

would have called at our homes, instead of buying refreshments at the Black Horse, where I am told everything is of the most expensive kind."

"Then why should he have thus summoned us?"

"We shall know once we have arrived, and I am minded to eat fast before the business be unfolded in order that I may have all the entertainment possible while we remain there."

No check was put upon us when we announced our purpose, for our mothers had every confidence in Master Schuster, and we had taken the precaution to accompany each other when we told the news; therefore, in several minutes less than the time set we were at the Black Horse Inn looking around eagerly for David's uncle, and with many fears lest he had repented of his generosity.

The good man was there, however, true to his word, and the amount of food before him was so great as to surprise both my comrade and

myself, for instead of a lunch he had purchased a veritable feast.

No second invitation was needed, and with only such delay as was necessary in order to greet Master Schuster in becoming fashion, we fell-to, I following David's advice to eat rapidly lest we be interrupted before my hunger was appeased.

There was no need of such unseemly haste, however; for Master Schuster waited patiently until we were filled so full that another mouthful would have been impossible, and then said in a low tone, after looking stealthily around to make certain no one was within earshot:

"Are you lads minded for an adventure in behalf of the cause—one which has in it danger enough to please the most gluttonous swash-buckler, and much honor if it be successful?"

"Indeed we are, and it cannot come our way too quickly," I replied, without waiting to hear

David's opinion, for I knew full well what he would have said had I given him the time.

"And think you it would be possible to remain away from home a goodly portion of the time during the next week, or perhaps longer?"

"Ay, sir; if it so be you represent to our mothers that it is your desire we should be absent."

"I would not have you decide an important matter too quickly. Remember that the danger is great; if you should be taken, I believe your lives would pay the penalty, and even in case of success, we have nothing save the word of others—neither bond nor written undertaking."

"So that the adventure is for the cause, we need not waste our time speaking of rewards."

"And the danger?"

"We have been in no little peril when we carried news out of the city to our friends, and yet no one can say that David or I was ever like to show the white feather."

"I am not questioning your courage, lad; but wish you should understand that this is a serious matter—more important than anything you have ever even dreamed of adventuring on."

"There is no reason why you should search for bugbears, Uncle Jacob," David said quickly. "We are all the more eager to embark in it when you tell us of the danger."

"A man is never so courageous as when his stomach is full, therefore it was I fed you well before broaching the subject, and now I must believe you will carry out your parts in goodly fashion."

"What are they to be?"

Instead of replying Master Schnuster called for his account; paid it like a man who is not given to pinching his shillings, and walked out of the tavern after motioning us to follow.

By this time it can well be understood that we were on fire with curiosity; but, question as we might, Master Schnuster would speak no further

word until we were come to the common near the powder-house, when he halted and said :

"It was here I agreed to meet a gentleman at this hour, and from him, if he keeps the engagement, you will learn all that may be necessary."

Surely the plot was looking black enough to satisfy even David and me, who had ever hoped we might be concerned in some gigantic conspiracy against the king, and I am free to confess that for the moment I began to feel weak-kneed.

If the proposed business was of such a nature that Master Jacob Schuster should be willing to skulk in this fashion, then it must be indeed a serious matter.

David slyly took my hand in his as we waited there in the darkness, and I believed it was not only because of the cold, piercing wind that his teeth chattered so merrily.

Anything was better than waiting here

within the shadow of the powder-house at such a time, and great was my relief of mind when a stranger suddenly appeared from around the corner.

The newcomer greeted Master Schuster in a friendly fashion, and asked quickly, before David's uncle had time to introduce us:

"Are these the two of whom you spoke?"

"Yes, and although they be young, I can vouch both for their courage and their fidelity to the cause."

"How much do they know?"

"Nothing more than that they are needed for an adventure of great peril."

"Is it asking too much that you pace to and fro near to the road, where you may see if any one approaches this place, while I make known to the lads what we would have them do? I am not minded they shall embark without knowing all, and through your recommendation I am about to put my life in their hands."

"They would not betray you, however sore might be their suffering. I will keep an eye out, so that you be not surprised, and you may summon me when the interview is ended."

Then Master Schuster walked out toward the road, and I stepped forward a few paces in order to get a better view of this man who proposed to tell us—two strangers to him—that which would prove his undoing were we minded to act the part of traitors.

I do not believe he was more than five years our senior; an inch or two above six feet in height, and with a face so gloomy that it was as if he suspected some portion of his own body had designs against the remainder of his anatomy.

Taking him all in all, so far as I could judge at that moment, he was not one I would choose as a comrade, yet at the same time I would have taken his word if my life was in the balance.

While I gazed at him he was scrutinizing us, and when this portion of the interview was concluded to the satisfaction of all, he asked our names, where we lived and who were our parents, until I cut short such catechism by giving the history of each, even down to such details as when David had the fever, and I was laid up with a broken arm.

He listened attentively, as if each particular was deeply interesting, and when I had come to an end because I could think of nothing more to say, he took his turn at talking, and from that instant there was not a moment wasted on useless matters.

"I am John Champe, of Virginia, sergeant-major in Lee's Legion," he began, and I was so ill-mannered as to interrupt him by asking:

"Have you left the service?"

"No; although my comrades, as well as the British in this city, believe I have deserted."

"Believe it?" I cried. "How can they be-

lieve such a thing unless there be some truth in the matter?"

"And so there is, as will be seen if you hold your peace while I tell my story, after which you must believe I can be depended upon, for I put it in your power to have me arrested as a spy. I am informed that General Washington himself sent for my commander—Major Henry Lee—and told him he believed there might be found in the Legion a soldier capable and willing to undertake a delicate and hazardous project. The major was so kind as to mention my name as one who might be trusted, and it was arranged that I be approached with a plan whereby I was apparently to desert, make my way into this city, and here attempt to capture the traitor Arnold."

It was David who interrupted the stranger at this point by an exclamation of amazement that so daring a scheme should even so much as be spoken of, and my knees grew

weaker, for this promised to be more of an adventure than I had ever desired.

"At first I was unwilling my comrades should believe, even for a few weeks, that I had basely deserted; but the major used weighty arguments, chiefest among which was the fact that I should be obliging the Commander-in-chief himself, and might make such a name as years of service could not win for me."

"When did you appear to desert?" I asked in a tremulous tone, more to gain courage from hearing my own voice than because I was curious on the matter.

"I will come to that later. I agreed to the plan, and was given letters to two gentlemen on whom it was said I could fully rely. One was Master Jacob Schuster, and the other need not be named now. At eleven o'clock on the night of the 20th I took my cloak, valise and orderly-book, crept out of quarters to the stable, and there saddled my horse without

being detected. It was necessary to lead the animal half a mile or more lest his footsteps on the frozen ground should give the alarm, and I be taken before having really started."

"If your major was in the plot, why was all that necessary?" David asked. "I fail to see why you could not have walked out in the open day."

"That would have been to tell every man in the command of my purpose, and, thanks to the spies which are around every encampment, General Clinton must have been warned of my intention before I arrived. I was to be a deserter in every sense of the word, save that I so acted under command of my superior officer. It had been arranged that I ride to Paulus Hook where is a British post; but just as I left the tavern near Bergen, known as the Three Pigeons, I saw a detachment from the Legion, led by Lieutenant Middleton, in hot pursuit of me."

"How far away?" I asked, forgetting in the interest the story had for me, that it was not seemly to interrupt the sergeant.

"Less than half a mile. There no longer appeared to be any chance that I could gain Paulus Hook; therefore I drew rein for Communipaw, knowing that off the settlement would be found two of his majesty's galleys. Now I believed myself safe from pursuit, for it was reasonable to suppose the lieutenant would continue on into Bergen, and I slackened pace, for my horse was nearly winded. This act of humanity was near being the undoing of my mission; for no sooner had I arrived on the shore of Communipaw Bay than the cavalry appeared, now so near at hand it seemed certain I must be taken."

"Of course you would have come to no harm, for Major Lee could bear witness as to why you were thus apparently deserting,"

David said, quite as interested in the story as was I.

"True; but the plan would thus have miscarried, which was what I had to guard against. Fortunately those aboard the galleys were on the lookout, and that which had threatened to be a disaster but worked for my benefit. Dismounting, and with the few belongings in my hands, I sent the beast shoreward with a blow from the flat of my sword as I waded into the water, signaing furiously to those on the galley nearest me."

"What were the pursuers doing meanwhile?"

I asked.

"Riding at full speed in the hope of cutting me off before I could be taken up by a boat which instantly put out from one of the craft. No less than half a dozen musket-balls were sent after me by my late comrades; but I had the best of them by three or four minutes, and soon found myself on board the boat in safety,

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grieved to the heart because my companions in-arms would return to camp with the word that I had gone over to the enemy."

The sergeant paused an instant, and David and I literally held our breath in suspense to hear the conclusion.

"I was now with the enemy, having arrived in such fashion there could be no question but that I was all I claimed to be, and the captain of the galley gave me conveyance to this city, forwarding to Sir Henry Clinton, at the same time, a full account of my daring escape. With that general I soon had an interview, and he has proposed that I enlist in what is to be called the American Legion, which the traitor is now raising from such loyalists and deserters as are of the mind to aid the king."

"Do you count on so doing?" I asked, full of admiration for the young man who was thus gloriously serving the cause, and at the same moment saying to myself that I

would it were my good fortune to have a like opportunity.

"That is what must be done, I expect, in order that I may follow the movements of the traitor whom I hope soon to carry back to the American camp as a prisoner. You can well understand that I have not told this story with the idea of entertaining you lads. The time has come when I must have some assistance from the outside—assistance by those on whom I can rely with my life, and when I made such want known to Master Schuster he mentioned your names, pledging his own honor for your loyalty to the cause."

"He could not well have said other than that we are bound to it as closely as can be those whose hearts are set on the one matter. We, David and I, do not lay claim to being wondrous brave; but we would sooner suffer death a dozen times over than give any man the chance to say we were false to the colonists in this

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struggle, and only wait for the day when we may prove that such is no empty boast."

"The chance is now come, lad. Aid me, but at the same time with a full understanding of all that may be meant by defeat, and you shall have an opportunity of doing what falls to the lot of but few men in these provinces."

"What will you have us do?" David asked eagerly.

"Assist me in making Benedict Arnold a prisoner, and carrying him back to the American camp."

"That we will, right readily," I answered, before David had time to speak, "and in so doing we shall be pleasing ourselves."

"It will be necessary you follow my directions blindly, if need be; for in a matter like this there must be but one head."

"That we are agreed to," David cried, determined to speak for himself, that it might be seen he was of the same mind as I.

"If we fail it is possible you may share my fate, for on being taken I shall be hung as a spy."

"While we have no hankering after such a doom, yet the possibility does not frighten us," and I took David by the hand that he might have full credit for joining in what I believed to be a brave speech.

"You are lads after my own heart, and should have been raised in Virginia instead of here, where everything is measured by its value in money."

"I have no complaint to make against this province," David said thoughtfully; "but I should like to say I was from the same colony as that brave gentleman, General Washington."

"I believe you are almost Virginians even now," Sergeant Champe cried, as he seized us by the hands, wringing them with such force that we had a very good idea of the quality of his muscles.

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BENEDICT ARNOLD.
(From a Painting by Du Simitier, 1783.)

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"Yet you will find that we hold to this colony," I said, not minded that Virginia should be set up so highly as against our own province, "and it will please me to prove that we of New York are no more lacking in courage than the youths from your home."

"Now I am beginning to believe we may be comrades," Sergeant Champe cried, as if pleased with us, "and we will set about this work, each feeling every confidence in the other. Come, we will speak with Master Schuster."

CHAPTER II.

THE PLOT.

DURING our converse David's uncle had been pacing to and fro near the road where the wind had full sweep, and he must have felt relief at seeing us approaching, for his share in this interview had been most disagreeable.

"It is arranged that the lads will aid me," Sergeant Champe said as he laid his hand on Master Schuster's shoulder. "I believe they can do as good service as men, and we shall succeed in the work unless fortune serves us an ugly turn."

"What part have you set down for them?"

"None as yet; I have but just made them acquainted with the facts, for it was not to my

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mind that they embark in this adventure with their eyes closed."

"Then finish your converse, for there is nothing to prevent, and it had better be brought to an end as soon as may be."

"First of all we must gain accurate information as to the surroundings of the building in which the traitor is lodged."

"That I can give you now, sergeant. Understanding that it would be of importance, I strolled that way this afternoon, picking up such facts as are apparent to strangers."

"What did you learn?"

"Very little more than the boys are most likely already familiar with. In the rear of his quarters is a garden extending to the water's edge, and adjoining this a dark alley leads to the street. By asking a few careless questions I learned that the renegade usually returns to his lodgings about midnight; but, whatever the hour, makes it a custom to spend more

or less time in this same garden before retiring."

"You have done well, Master Schuster. There is little left for me, save to decide upon the plan, which I will do this night. To-morrow I shall enlist in the American Legion——"

"To what end? Once having signed the rolls you would be held as a deserter should you be taken prisoner after returning to your rightful command, and the Britishers need have no further excuse for hanging you."

"I have considered all that, my worthy sir, and know full well the dangers which attend such a course; but it must be done in order that I may have opportunity for free speech with the traitor."

"He has ever held himself high, and I question whether you could have an interview at will when you are no more than a private under his command," Master Schuster objected.

"I am promised a commission if I enlist, in

which case there will be certain intercourse with the traitor, and to my mind there is no more positive way of gaining an opportunity to spy upon him. It must be enlistment for me, whatever may befall at a later date."

I could understand that the sergeant would not be diverted from such plan as he had already formed, and Master Schuster must have realized the same, for he made no further attempt to dissuade him from what seemed like useless danger.

Then the two, meaning David's uncle and Sergeant Champe, conversed as they walked down the Boston road toward the fort, the talk being wholly upon the traitorous plot which would have delivered one of our strongholds into the hands of the British; and my comrade and I, keeping close at their heels, learned much that was new to us.

First we heard what price Benedict Arnold had received for thus selling himself body and

soul, which was, as nearly as I now remember it, six thousand pounds sterling in hand, and a commission as colonel in the British army, with the brevet rank of brigadier.

Save for the money, he had not bettered his fortunes, if that was the sole purpose in mind when he would have sacrificed the colonies to his greed; and money gained in such manner does not long remain in the hands of him who receives it, so I have often heard said.

Sergeant Champe claimed that, on Saturday before the Monday when Major André was executed, Captain Ogden was sent to Paulus Hook with an escort of twenty-five men for the professed purpose of carrying letters to General Clinton, and that he privately suggested to the British commander there, having instructions so to do from headquarters, that if Arnold's capture could be brought about immediately, Major André would be set free.

That plan had failed, however, as we knew,

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and now it was to be seen if this one, bold and dangerous as it was, would succeed.

It was decided between Master Schuster and the sergeant that we lads were to return to our homes that night, letting it appear as if we had done no more than enjoy a feast at the sign of the Black Horse.

Early on the following morning, however, David's uncle was to say he had work for us to perform which would often keep us away from home at night, and otherwise so arrange matters with our mothers that there would be no difficulty in going whithersoever we would until the plot was worked out to a triumphant ending, or disaster had come, bringing with it, for us at least, death.

I should have been better pleased if we were required to set about the business without delay; for I was burning with impatience to begin the adventure, which was far greater, and accompanied by more danger, than I had ever

thought it would be my good fortune to embark in, to further the cause.

Sergeant Champe, however, made no bones of dismissing us, once it had been decided we should present ourselves at Master Schuster's office next morning, within a reasonable time after the breakfast hour; but he did so with an air of exceeding friendliness, such as robbed the words of their severity.

"Remember, lads, having once set your faces toward this work there can be no turning back. Punctuality is as necessary as fidelity, and after we meet to-morrow morning you must conform your goings and comings to my commands."

I was not minded he should believe us to be lads who had had no experience in serious tasks, and therefore made reply :

"Although we are not soldiers, both of us understand all that may be implied in the word 'duty,' for we have been under the orders of no less a personage than General Sullivan

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in some performances almost as dangerous as this."

"I have already heard from Master Schuster how you lads have proved your devotion to the cause; and if I repeat certain instructions again and again, more often than seems necessary or kindly, you must set it down that I have grown timorous, as a man can well be pardoned for becoming when he is classed by his old comrades as a deserter, and may be apprehended by his new acquaintances as a spy. Even the knowledge of what we would do fails to take away either the shame for the one or the fear of the other."

The young Virginian spoke us so friendly, and withal so sadly, that I was shamed because of having made a pert answer to what was indeed a timely caution, and would have atoned for my over-hasty speech but that he cut me short ere I was well begun, by saying :

"I can understand, lad, what was in your

heart; and that we may work together to the greatest good, with the least friction among ourselves, I was disposed you should know all that bore heavily upon me."

Then he stretched out both hands as if in token of friendship, and when David and I had clasped them heartily he turned abruptly away, Master Schuster following, and we two watching until they disappeared in the distance down Nassau Street.

It was little less than a vain boast when I pertly told Sergeant Champe we had been under the orders of General Sullivan in some certain performances almost as dangerous as this promised to be; and if he could have turned back five minutes after saying good-night, he would have seen for a surety that we were unaccustomed to such perilous adventures, by our lingering in the street, starting in alarm at every sound, however slight.

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commands of General Sullivan, to which was attached a certain degree of danger in case the enemy should discover what we were about; and I may say, without boasting, that we had done our part well, or at least so it would seem from the words of praise and encouragement which were bestowed upon us.

But this adventure of Sergeant Champe's was something far different from anything we had ever done, and looking back upon it now I question whether even men grown old in the service would not have been in a certain degree timorous upon considering the matter in all its bearings.

Although Benedict Arnold was a traitor to his country, and one to be despised by all who love the cause, he was now among those who had sworn to protect him, and would do so, as could be seen from the fact that Sir Henry Clinton had housed him in the building next adjoining his own residence.

The city was overrun with redcoats, as can well be fancied; one could hardly walk half a mile through the streets after the hours of darkness without meeting two or three detachments, out on patrol, and be forced to explain his reasons for being abroad.

David Rhinelander and I well knew how difficult it was to depart from the city without a military pass: and yet here was a young sergeant from Virginia who not only proposed to leave New York when it should be his pleasure, but to take with him a prisoner, and that prisoner a man who must have been well-known by this time to every redcoat on the island; for traitors were not so plentiful in those days but that each man and boy would have a look at one.

I do not believe you could have found a Britisher who had either regard or respect for this renegade; but yet we knew full well they would not suffer him to be carried away, and

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even that private soldier who detested him most heartily would have done valiant battle against us should our purpose be known.

All this I set down that it may be the better understood why David's mind and mine were in such a whirl that to go quietly home and lie down in bed with the idea of sleeping was out of the question.

As for myself, it was much as though I were burning with a fever. My mouth was parched, and my throat dry; the barking of a dog in the distance sounded loud as the roaring of a lion, and the sighing of the night wind like unto the howl of the tempest, all of which is much the same as though I had confessed to being exceedingly timorous.

We two, David and I, stood on the street corner in silence, starting apprehensively at the lightest sound after Master Schuster and Sergeant Champe had left us, and mayhap five

minutes passed in such manner before my comrade asked in a whisper :

"What are we to do now, Oliver?"

"Go home and shiver till the morning comes, for certain it is that my eyes will not be closed in slumber this night."

"I would he had waited until the moment for action had come, before explaining his purpose; for then we should not be forced to remain inactive, the sport of our own fears, and I am grown timorous, Oliver Littlefield—that much I may confess to you alone."

"Yet you have no thought of turning back?"

"Not even though I knew to a certainty the adventure would end in our undoing."

"It is yet early in the night," I said, seized by a sudden thought. "Our mothers know we are with Master Schuster, and therefore will not be alarmed if we remain abroad many hours. Now I am minded to have a look at the house where this traitor lives, and that done we

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shall be the better prepared when work is begun."

This plan pleased Oliver greatly, not so much because of the preparations that would be making, as that it gave us a semblance of something to do at the time when we most needed employment.

We turned back and struck across the common at a rapid pace until we were come to Broad Way, down which we walked leisurely, as if abroad merely for pleasure, deciding between ourselves that in event of being halted by the patrol we should make such explanation of our being abroad.

There was no reason why we should not have continued straight on, until arriving at the house which sheltered the traitor; but it seemed to us as if our purpose was suspected by every one whom we passed, and on coming near to the ruins of Trinity Church we made our way across the yard to Lumber Street,

going thence to the water's edge as if fleeing from pursuit.

Here we surveyed the premises as best we might in the darkness, walking up and down the alley from Greenwich Street to Broad Way no less than four times, but neither seeing nor hearing any one in the garden.

It was much too early for the traitor to take his nightly airing; and this, perhaps, saved us from bringing suspicion upon ourselves, for had we been observed loitering there I doubt not but that it would have become necessary to make some explanation of our purpose.

During more than two hours we walked to and fro, not daring to converse even in whispers on the subject nearest our hearts, lest the words should be overheard, and then, having fatigued our bodies, we were in better condition to follow the advice given by Sergeant Champe, although I was far from wishing to be alone in my chamber.

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Had we been two of the king's most devoted subjects we could not have made our way through the city with less impediment, for when we were arrived at the door of my mother's dwelling there had been no interference with our movements.

"I shall come here at an early hour to-morrow morning, Oliver Littlefield," David whispered as we clasped hands in parting, and I could well understand that he would keep his promise faithfully; for, judging from what was in my own mind, I knew his eyes would be opened with the first light of the coming day.

Master Jacob Schuster gave proof that his anxiety regarding the outcome of the plot was nearly as great as was David's and mine, for my mother was not yet arisen next morning when a knock was heard at the door, and by her command I hastened to learn who might be this early visitor, although knowing full well that I could have spoken his name before seeing him.

It must have been that he feared I would speak some incautious word, for instantly we stood face to face he made a warning gesture with his hand as he said stiffly :

"Present my excuses to Mistress Littlefield, lad, for such an untimely visit ; but the time is precious to me when I have so much of business on hand, and I could not well afford to wait until a more seemly hour."

Then I, to carry out the acting which he had begun, asked innocently :

"Would you have speech with my mother, sir?"

"Ay, that I would, lad, and as soon as may be, again craving her pardon for coming at such an hour."

I knew that my mother must have overheard the conversation, yet going to the foot of the stairs I repeated that which Master Schuster had said; and she, good soul, flustered by this early visit, came down ere yet it seemed to me possible she could have arisen from the bed.

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If he had been face to face with the noblest lady in the province, Master Schuster could not have been more humble in his apologies, or used so many high-flown words while asking pardon for his coming.

In fact, he beat about the bush so long that I began to grow anxious, fearing lest he would never come to an end of words.

The business was quickly arranged, however, when he broached the subject by explaining, without too much of detail, that he was desirous of hiring David and me to perform certain duties which it was not necessary should be explained.

My mother readily gave her consent to the proposition, although making some show of a demur when Master Schuster stated that it might even be necessary that we remain away from home at night on some occasions.

When this business had been brought to an end I was told to await there David's coming,

and my mother set about getting breakfast, while Master Schuster went, as he declared, to arrange for the hire of my comrade.

Before David came I was in mortal terror lest I betray the secret to my mother, who was full of speculations as to why the worthy merchant should have come himself on an errand which might equally well have been done by one of his clerks, and over and over again did she ask whether he had made any mention of this business while we were with him at the sign of the Black Horse.

Not being willing to tell my mother an untruth, I was finally forced to say that he had spoken somewhat of his purpose, but pledged both David and I to secrecy; therefore, unless she would have me break my word, I must remain silent.

It is not likely this satisfied my mother; but it certainly gave me great relief, for instantly she ceased her questioning, and refrained from

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speculating aloud in my presence, contenting herself by saying :

"I hope it has nothing to do with the war, Oliver boy, for since your father fell at Trenton I have none but you left me; and surely the colonists are not in such sore need that they would take a widow's only child from her."

"If it had to do with the war, mother, it would be a question of our enlisting; and that, you know, I might not do without your consent. However, this much you should remember, that Master Schuster desires to keep his business a profound secret; and were you to speak of it to others, even so much as to wonder what it was, a wrong might be done the gentleman who gives me employment."

I knew this would in a certain degree arouse my mother's suspicions; but better that than for her to speak unguardedly to some of the neighbors, and thus be the means of having a watch set upon us.

My breakfast was but just concluded when David entered with much the appearance of a lad who has been soundly flogged.

At other times, when we were engaged in what might be of benefit to the cause, he had been joyous to the verge of triumph; but now he was subdued, and I could well understand that the possible perils of the adventure were already weighing heavily upon him.

"Will you return for dinner?" my mother asked as I arose from the table and prepared to accompany my comrade.

"That is as Master Schuster may say; but it will be as well if you do not expect me, for surely we shall find enough with which to satisfy our hunger, and supper will be all the more enjoyable because of short rations at noon."

Then my mother kissed me much as if I were going forth to battle, and the thought of her anguish if it should so chance that through this

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plot David and I were brought to the gallows, so unnerved and dispirited me that when we were on the street I had hard work to keep back the tears from my eyelids.

Almost anything would have been better than cowardice at such a time, and I took good care not to so much as look toward David, until he said in a voice that trembled:

"We shall feel better, Oliver, once the work has been begun."

Then I understood that I was not alone in my timorousness.

CHAPTER III.

THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Now that the sun was shining, David and I were far more valiant than we had been the evening previous, having also gotten rid of the home influences that naturally serve to weaken a fellow when he sets out upon a dangerous undertaking.

What in the darkness had seemed venturesome to the last degree, was not so desperate by the light of day, and we soon began to feel as if we could do our share of the work without so much as ever coming within the shadow of the gallows, although that Sergeant Champe's days might be ended thereon seemed very reasonable.

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He, a soldier in the Continental Army, was within the enemy's lines under false pretenses; and should the true story of his escape be discovered, or his hand be seen in the effort to capture the traitor Arnold, then the doom of a spy would necessarily be his.

With us the situation was far different, since we were at home, had no absolute connection with the American Army, and even were we discovered in the attempt, it hardly seemed possible that death would be the penalty for our portion of the work.

Thus it was I argued with myself, and repeated aloud for David's benefit the result as we went toward Master Schuster's office.

How much good such words did my comrade it is not for me to say; but I found in the idea a great sense of relief—so much, in fact, that I was as light-hearted by the time we were arrived at our destination as I had previously been downcast.

David's uncle was more distraught when we presented ourselves than I ever remember to have seen him; it was almost as if he feared our visit might bring evil, and instead of speaking with us in the office as had been his wont, he took us to the rear of the wareroom, although nothing was said that might not have been heard by any person.

"I have no means of guessing what it is proposed you lads shall do; but as was arranged last night, you are to remain here until some word be received from the sergeant, after which, and I say this for your safeguard as well as my own, it will be best that you do not present yourselves here, save when it may be absolutely necessary. You are like to have more intercourse with the Britishers than with our friends, and it is not wise to show yourselves on good terms in both camps."

If Master Schuster had told us that he regretted having appointed his office as a

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rendezvous, I should not have been more certain of it, and therefore when he ceased speaking I proposed that we wait at some convenient place out of doors rather than in the building, and for the moment it seemed as if he was minded to take advantage of the proposition; but then, much as though ashamed of his fears, he added hurriedly:

"No, no, fads! Stay where you are, since this was the place selected for the meeting. I only warned you against certain movements in the future, thinking mayhap you would come here so often as to excite suspicion. It is best, perhaps, that you remain at this end of the wareroom, where my patrons will not be so likely to see you."

Then, motioning toward two boxes which were behind a pile of barrels, as if these might be used in the stead of stools, Master Schuster hastened away, looking thoroughly ill at ease, and I so stated to David, adding in conclusion:

"If it so be a citizen like Master Schuster is alarmed, for no other cause than we two are in his wareroom, how great must be the danger which threatens us!"

"I cannot see how it is possible any peril threatens just now, for thus far we have not so much as lifted our hands against the king; but Uncle Jacob is feeling as I was last night, and it is not for me, who was even more timorous, to laugh at his fears."

Had we been received by Master Schuster as we usually were—that is to say, if he had given little or no heed to our presence—I should have felt that much of the danger existed only in my own mind; but now, as David and I sat there alone with ample time to think over the matter, it came to me that the peril was even greater than I had anticipated, and that Master Schuster knew more of the plot than had been intrusted to us.

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maigned as if in hiding, and then David's uncle came hurriedly to say that the sergeant was in the street, and would have us join him.

Without waiting for further words we hastened away, and I am certain did not move any too quickly to please Master Schuster, who, I fancy, gave vent to a deep sigh of relief when we were well over the threshold.

On the opposite side of the way, a short distance above the warehouse, we saw the sergeant, who, having made certain we observed him, moved leisurely on, which to our minds was an invitation to join him.

I was more pleased with the appearance of this raw-boned, sedate-looking Virginian in the daytime than I had been at night.

He had the air of one who would not be quick to understand when he was beaten; and as I saw him there in advance of us, the thought came to my mind that however much of danger might threaten, or however many

difficulties be in the path, he would neither draw back nor swerve from his course until absolutely forced so to do.

He greeted us cheerily, and with nothing in his manner to show that he was either over-weighted or alarmed by the responsibility.

Beginning the conversation as if it had been but lately interrupted, he said, speaking in such manner that were his words overheard even by Sir Henry Clinton himself there could be no suspicions attached to their meaning :

"When I arrived in New York I was recommended to call upon General Arnold, who, as you may know, is engaged in raising what is to be called the American Legion, a force composed almost entirely of Loyalists and deserters from the Continental Army."

David looked up in surprise, not understanding whither such conversation might tend, and as the sergeant paused asked :

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"Did you have a long interview with General Arnold?"

"It might be considered so when you understand that a brevet brigadier in his majesty's service was talking with a sergeant-major lately from the rebel army. The gentleman was very kind, and personally asked if I would join his Legion; but when I humbly ventured to suggest that if I should do so, and was then captured by my former comrades I would assuredly be hanged, he kindly changed the subject, stating, however, that he would assign me quarters among his recruiting sergeants."

There was in my mind an idea that the Virginian made these statements in what might be called a continuation of his story told on the previous night; but David, who had been expecting to hear immediately what part we were to play, looked thoroughly puzzled at this roundabout way of setting to work, and again interrupted by asking:

"Then you decided not to enlist, sir?"

"Such had been my decision; but after thinking the matter over seriously I came to the conclusion, as I stated to the general late last evening when I was so fortunate as to meet him on the street, and he so kind as to grant me a brief interview, that it might be as well if I joined the legion, since death would be the punishment for desertion, whether I was captured while wearing a red coat or in civilian's garments. He quite agreed with me, and further promised that I should be made sergeant-major. Therefore it was I enlisted this morning."

Now I was surprised, for although the Virginian had declared his intention of so doing, several hours previous, I then questioned whether at the last moment he would not decide against it. For him the die was cast in good truth.

"Then you have signed the rolls?" I asked, not attempting to hide my surprise.

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"Hardly more than an hour since, but am given liberty until such time as we shall have duties to perform. At present there is nothing to be done at the barracks, and I would see what I may of New York, for perhaps a second opportunity will not present itself."

"Are you bent on sight-seeing this morning?" I asked after a short pause, during which I was trying to decide in my own mind the reason for such conversation.

"I may answer yes and no to that question. Since you are the only acquaintances I have in the city," he continued in a meaning tone, "and because it may not be possible for me to induce you to join this portion of the king's forces which will be sent southward under General Arnold, I have thought that before you entertained me with the sights of the town I would show you what perchance you have never seen—a military barracks."

Of course we understood that this long-

winded way of coming to it was a proposal for us to see where the sergeant would be quartered, lest peradventure it might become necessary to call on him suddenly, although I could not fully understand why he was so careful in his manner of giving the invitation.

However that may be, we at once, and as a matter of course, agreed that it would please us to do as he suggested.

To our great surprise we were led directly to the fort beyond Bowling Green, instead of to some building, for I had supposed this newly-formed legion would be kept to a certain degree by themselves; but it must have been that General Clinton was doubtful as to how the men might be treated by others in the service, for a Britisher hates a deserter and a turncoat, however much benefit he may gain from him.

Therefore it was that we, who had several times feared we might enter the fort as prison-

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ers, followed the sergeant without being questioned, and were soon in the midst of that worthy band of renegades, spies and informers, who, having done all the harm to the cause that was possible, were now leaguering themselves together under the command of the arch traitor himself.

As we soon learned, this visit had been proposed in order that we might, should occasion require, be able to communicate with Sergeant Champe without delay.

He spoke to several of the legion, saying it was his intention to persuade us to enlist, and declaring that we were the only persons in New York with whom he was acquainted.

Without having absolutely told a falsehood, he made it appear much as if we were old friends, if not relatives; and thus it was that we took our first step in the plot—not a pleasant one, since we were forced to receive those villainous curs on a friendly footing.

During the entire forenoon we remained within the limits of the fort, and in that time had good opportunity of seeing the precious band who were ready to work injury to their own country.

Among these was Jethro Stork—he who lived on Duke Street, and had held himself devoted to the cause of liberty until that certain time when he found an opportunity to lay hold of ten pieces of the king's gold, whereat he suddenly became a Royalist.

David and I had seen Jethro, but perchance he did not remember us; his brother Benjamin, a lad of about our age, had ever been a loud-mouthed Tory, and he it was with whom we were acquainted, but not friendly.

"If it was Ben who had enlisted in this so-called American Legion, I would say the city was well rid of him," David whispered to me.

"And New York will lose nothing when Jethro leaves it."

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"True; but we know for a certainty Jethro will get himself hanged in due time wherever he may be, while Ben is far too cautious to put his precious body into jeopardy."

Then, not caring to see more of the Stork family, for we could get a sight of such renegades any day, we turned away, and at noon ate the king's rations, which would surely have disagreed with our stomachs but for the fact that we were doing so with a purpose which it was hoped would result 'in good to the cause.

Half an hour or more after noon Sergeant Champe said to David and me, speaking in a tone that might have been heard by any of the recruits who chose to listen:

"Now if you lads are minded to show me around New York, I will thank you for the service. Above all things I would see that portion of the city which was burned during the great fire of '76."

"That we can readily show you, and without much walking to and fro," I replied, whereat the three of us left the barracks, departing from the fort without any more difficulty than if we had been on the staff of General Clinton himself.

As we were passing one of the sentinels, the sergeant said :

"I first have a desire to see the ruins of Trinity Church. Of course I know where they are ; but it would please me much to have an extended view of them, that I may thereby form some idea of what the building was like."

As may be supposed, we acted upon his suggestion without delay, and, going up Broadway, stopped at the ruins, as if our only purpose in coming had been to see them.

The sergeant led the way across the churchyard until we were a short distance in the rear of where the building had formerly stood, and

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here, in the very heart of New York, where the king was master, and Sir Henry Clinton, his dutiful servant, did we arrange further details of that plot against his majesty and his majesty's prime traitor.

Standing where we were no one could approach within earshot save we were aware of the fact, and we conversed—perhaps it would be more correct to say Sergeant Champe detailed his plans without fear of eavesdropping.

He had already decided upon the course of action, and I soon understood that we were to be but assistants, not principals or advisers, in the plot.

"I have decided that on the night of the 5th day of November we shall be able to make a prisoner of General Arnold," he said abruptly, and David and I were so surprised by the startling announcement that we stood silent and motionless like simples; for it did not seem to us possible the sergeant, however able

a man he was, could have perfected his arrangements so quickly.

"If the work is to be done at all, the sooner we move in it the better, and nothing will be gained by much preparation. Now listen, for it is my purpose that you repeat this to another: As is well known, Arnold returns to his quarters about midnight, and thus far, previous to going to bed, has always taken a stroll in the garden. Now I propose that on the night mentioned David shall procure a boat, and lay in waiting for us near the foot of the garden. You and I, Oliver, will secrete ourselves amid the shrubbery, while another, whose name I have not yet mentioned, stands watch outside. When Arnold appears it should be a simple matter to deprive him of his liberty and the power of speech."

"And even then it will be necessary to get him to the boat," I suggested, yet bewildered. 'We may not be able to carry him without

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attracting attention, unless you are depending upon the fact that the streets shall be empty just at that time."

"I have no such foolish expectation as that. We shall undoubtedly meet some of the patrol or watch as we make our way from the garden; but it will be a simple matter to represent him as one drunken whom we are carrying to his home or the guardhouse, as the case may be. That portion of the plot depends wholly upon chance. Regarding the capture we may be more positive. Nothing can defeat us save the fact that he departs from his usual custom, in which case the next night will suffice for our purpose. All that now remains to be done is to acquaint Major Lee with our intentions, and have him see to it that horses are ready for us on the Jersey shore not later than half an hour after midnight."

"Acquaint Major Lee!" David repeated.

"Why, he is in the American camp; either at Pompton or West Point!"

"Nay, lad, most likely at Dobb's Ferry, and you may have speech with him to-morrow morning, if you be diligent on the way."

"We may?" David cried in surprise. "Is it your purpose that we go into the American camp?"

"You have done so more than once, I am told."

"Ay, and can again," I replied.

"Then set out at once. Here are six shillings in case you should need money during the journey; and even though I had more it would not be well to increase the amount, since should you be overhauled, suspicions might be aroused at your being so well supplied with funds."

"Do you mean that we are to leave immediately—this afternoon?" David asked, as if it were not yet possible for him to understand what had been said.

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"Ay, lad, so soon as you can get away. There yet remains four days before the time I have set. You should be at the American camp to-morrow morning, and can return to New York the night after, which will give us time to change our arrangements, if it so be Major Lee sees any reason for delay."

I knew full well that in addition to the difficulty of leaving New York would come the question of entering the American lines, and therefore asked the sergeant what credentials we might take with us, which would admit of our passing the sentinels, once we were arrived at the outposts.

"There is nothing I can do for you in that way, Oliver Littlefield," he said sadly. "Remember, I am considered by all, save the Commander-in-chief and Major Lee, as a deserter. You must make your way there and back as best you can, unless it should chance

Master Schuster could give you what would serve as credentials."

"That he cannot do," David replied quickly. "The last time we set out from the city it was near four-and-twenty hours before he succeeded in so much as getting us a pass to leave town, and then he greatly desired we should visit some New Hampshire troops, among whom he had acquaintances; but claimed he could not get the necessary permit."

"Then you must depend upon your own resources, remembering that by the day after to-morrow it is necessary to have returned. Let me repeat, as forcibly as may be possible, that my name is to be mentioned to no person save Major Lee, and then only when you are certain none other will hear the words."

"What shall we tell him in addition to the plan you propose to carry out?"

"That will suffice. Should he ask any questions concerning me, answer them as truthfully

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as you can, and forget not the night I have set, for unless we have horses on the Jersey side awaiting us, we shall never be able to get our prisoner within the American lines."

It was a blind sort of a journey we were called upon to undertake, and without any preparation whatsoever; therefore it was that I stood looking mutely at David instead of setting about the work at once, and Sergeant Champe asked with much sharpness in his tones:

"Are you expecting time will hang heavily on your hands, unless you make a delay here?"

"I was thinking how we might best set about it, for it is not as simple as you appear to think, this journey to and from the American lines."

"So, at the first show of difficulty, your courage deserts you?" he asked in a sneering tone. "You who were ready to aid me even in the face of death, stand questioning as to how you may perform what should be a familiar

task. Thrice I am told you have been inside the lines, and why shall you waste the moments by debating how it may be done the fourth time?"

The tone of his voice, quite as much as the words, nettled me, and turning stiffly after motioning David to follow, I gave him what might have passed for a military salute, as I said:

"We will meet you in this place on the day after to-morrow."

"You had best present yourselves boldly at the fort and ask for me there," he replied with a smile, and then it was that I understood his harsh words had simply been intended to spur us on.

Nevertheless I did not linger, but with my hand on David's shoulder, walked through the inclosure to Lumber Street, cudgeling my brains to decide how we might make the journey to Dobb's Ferry within twenty-four hours.

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water's edge did my comrade venture any remark, and then it was to say grimly:

"I am free to admit that the sergeant takes many chances in thus joining the American Deserters' Legion—for that is the name by which it should be known. Yet at the same time he would have it appear as if our part in this matter was as nothing. Since he can arrange our plan so glibly, it would have been well had he told us how we might set about the journey."

"But since he didn't, David Rhineland, and because we have no mind to fail in the first work set us, we must go ahead, blindly trusting to chance."

"And it will be a chance if you get through on time. Were we given two or three days, so that we might watch our opportunity for leaving the city, then would the case be different; but it is proposed that we start immediately, and I ask you how that may be done?"

"We must use the skiff we borrowed the last

time of Master Taylor, and embark as if bent on pleasure."

"And think you we shall be permitted to do so in the light of day?"

"That we must venture on. It may be the very boldness of the attempt will prove friendly, for the guard could not suppose we would set about to visit the American lines without trying to disguise our purpose."

"Then do you take the lead, and I will follow wherever you may say. I make no claims at being a prophet, but yet venture to predict that we shall find ourselves in the gaol, or as prisoners within the fort, before the sun sets rather than on our way up the river."

I was much of David's opinion, but would not admit it just then; for if both of us were weak-kneed at the start, then had the venture failed before we began, and while I had little faith of its success I determined to make it appear as if I was valiant and confident.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INQUISITIVE STRANGER.

DAVID ventured no further remark.

One who did not know him as well as I, would have said he was disgruntled, if not absolutely angry, at being sent forth on such a mission; but I understood that his silence came from anxiety lest we should fail, and paid no attention to what in another lad would have been ill humor.

It was useless for me to try to form any plan of action in the limited space of time at our disposal, and after gazing about me in vain for ten minutes or more I said, speaking to myself, and not aware that I had raised my voice:

"We will buy hooks and lines and appear to be fishing along the bank, working up-stream

until, if fortune favors us, we are so far out of the city that it may be possible to pull across without attracting the attention of the sentinels."

It was when David made reply to this that I realized I had given words to my thoughts.

"Mayhap it is as well to start in that way as another, and while it seems impossible we should be allowed to leave, there is a chance the very boldness of the plan will carry it through."

"It gives me heart to hear you speak like that, lad, for it is your old self, and but for the fact of what lays behind all this, neither of us would be so timorous. If your Uncle Jacob had proposed that we make our way to West Point to learn what news might be about the camp, we, understanding that no one was in peril if we failed, should have set about the task without thought of danger."

"Very true, and if the redcoats stopped us

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it would be a trifling matter ; whereas now if we are delayed it means, perhaps, the undoing of all the plot in behalf of which the sergeant has ventured his liberty and his life."

"Let us forget all that for the time, and have only in mind the desire to leave New York. I know of a shop hard by where we can buy lines, and while I am there you shall go ahead to acquaint Master Taylor with the fact that we desire his skiff. Get some bait, also; for we must play the part of fishermen whether we expect to catch anything or not."

There was a cheery expression on David's face as he left me, and it had not disappeared when I met him again at the water's edge half an hour later.

I had bought the lines and hooks; he had seen Master Taylor and gotten a dozen clams, wherefore we were equipped for the undertaking, and it only remained to embark.

We were at the foot of Stone Street.

A short distance away were two redecoats coming toward the water in a leisurely fashion, and as if bent on pleasure rather than business.

Anchored in the river less than half a musket-shot off was one of the king's ships, and in mid-stream, as if having come from the direction of the fort, was an eight-oared barge, in the stern-sheets of which sat an officer wearing a cocked hat, and so profusely decorated with gold braid that there came into my mind thoughts of the golden calf which had been set up to be worshiped.

Without seeming to look at these things we saw them all, David and I; but did our best to appear indifferent, as if they could in no possible way concern us.

At the time it seemed to me as if I played my part well; but I now remember how my knees trembled when I stepped on board the skiff, and it did not increase my courage to see David fumbling nervously in the attempt to

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break open one of the clams, that we might bait our hooks.

If the truth need be told we were both frightened, although there was nothing near about to cause alarm.

We gained in courage, however, or at least I can say as much for myself, when, entering the skiff, we pushed off without seemingly attracting the attention of any one.

Had there never been any uprising against the king, we could not have had less difficulty in setting out on this voyage; but I well knew it was one thing to push out into the stream a short distance as if to fish, and another to continue straight on up the river.

However, our faces were set in that direction, and we should go on until forcibly stopped; but not at a pace which would show we were bent on getting to any particular point within a certain time.

We moved leisurely, I working the oars with

a trifle more than sufficient force to stem the current, and David pretending to fish, but making a very poor fist of it, as any one might say who was close at hand, for he trembled so violently that his line danced up and down in the water as if he was churning.

Inch by inch we crept up the stream, keeping close watch, as can well be imagined, upon all within sight; but yet no one gave heed to our movements.

My timorousness vanished gradually; David ceased to tremble, and when we were abreast of Partition Street, I could not refrain from saying to the lad:

"We feared pain before being hurt. It seemed certain we should not be allowed to embark, and yet here we are started on the voyage without hindrance."

"Yes, we have started," David replied doubtfully; "but yet it is almost a stretch of the imagination to say so much as that. We are

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loitering about here in the boat, and it remains to be seen how far we may row up-stream before some one hails us."

"We may as well make the venture thoroughly," giving more strength to my stroke, and the skiff glided over the water with reasonable rapidity; but yet no one hailed us.

"The next time it is necessary for us to visit the American camp, instead of hanging around the water-front after midnight for a chance to slip off in the darkness, I shall set forth in the same bold fashion we have done this day."

David made no reply.

He was ever one who insisted on strong proof before being confident of anything, and I understood that he was waiting until we should have pushed on past the city before giving way to joy.

When we were abreast of Barkly Street, I suddenly bethought myself that we would stand in sore need of food if it became neces-

sary to row the skiff all the way to Dobb's Ferry, and made the suggestion to David that he go ashore to buy, at a shop which I knew was hard by the water-front, such as would serve us for at least one meal.

He objected to making any halt lest by laying in stores we should bring suspicions upon ourselves; but I laughed at his fears, declaring that the redecoats were not grown so alarmed as to fall into a panic when two lads purchased enough of provisions to supply themselves with a supper, and by ridicule persuaded him to do as I wished.

Once ashore he bought such food as would have made three substantial meals for us, probably arguing that he might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, and when we pushed off the second time without opposition, both of us were confident we would accomplish our purpose without difficulty or danger.

Ten minutes later we were at the outskirts

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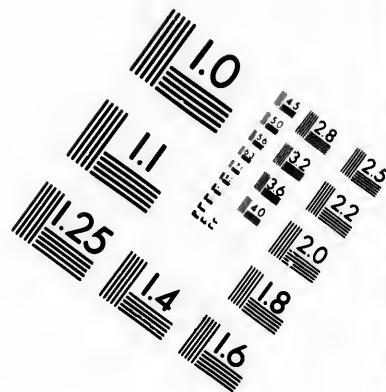
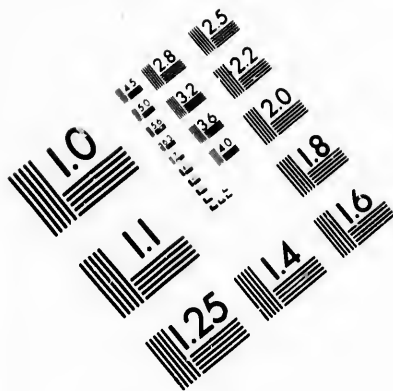
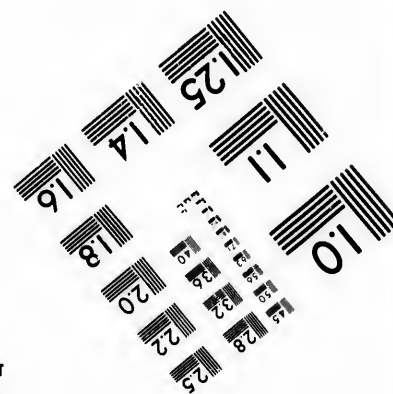
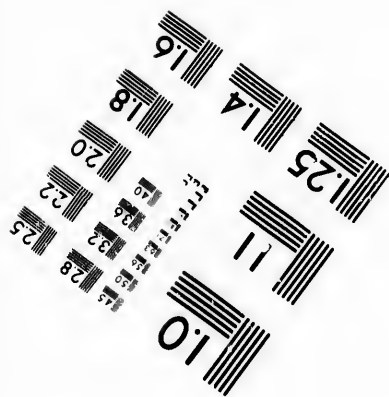
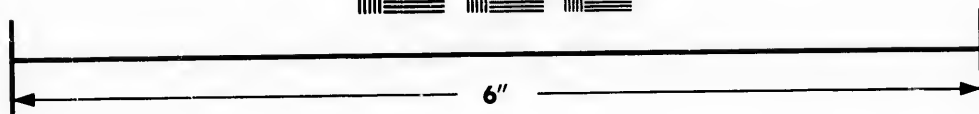
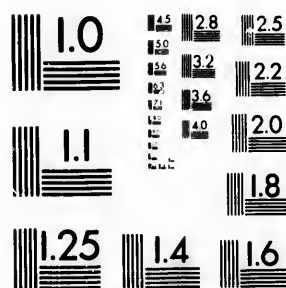


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of the town, being opposite the rope-walk, and at that moment, when all danger seemed to have been passed, we were both startled by hearing our names called loudly from the shore :

For a full minute I gazed around me in surprise and fear, and then saw, standing half hidden behind some bales of hemp, Ben Stork, a brother to that Jethro whom we had met in the barracks of the American Deserters' Legion.

"We must get rid of him in short order," David said in a half whisper.

"Ay; but how may that be done? The young Tory has hailed us for a purpose; and should we not reply might raise an alarm that we were fleeing from the city."

Then Ben Stork cried out once more, coming a few paces nearer the water's edge, and I, as if having seen him for the first time, replied by asking what he desired.

"Where are you lads bound?"

"Fishing, as you can see."

"Take me aboard."

"The skiff is not large enough for three, and besides, we are not inclined for company," David replied quickly.

Ben Stork knew that we did not look upon him as a friend, and never courted his company, therefore my comrade's remark could have been no surprise; yet he treated the matter as though he was wholly at a loss to understand why we should not desire his companionship.

I had ceased rowing, and was allowing the boat to drift with the current, thinking that we might thus get rid of him even though we were going backward on the journey, when he cried:

"If you are really fishing there is no reason why I could not come aboard. If you're bound on some rebel business, as, it is said, you have engaged in more than once, then I understand why you are not inclined for my company."

This was little less than a threat, and I so understood it.

That we should find ourselves stopped, after having passed the most dangerous points, by a worthless Tory like Ben Stork was enough of vexation to make a fellow gnash his teeth with rage, and David came nigh to doing so.

"The skiff cannot be increased in size whatever business we may be bent on," I cried, thinking to parley with the fellow, for I knew full well that it was in his heart to do us a wrong turn when an opportunity came.

"Let me see how many fish you have caught?" he demanded rather than asked, and it was in my mind to go on shore and flog the Tory villain.

"Since when has it been that we must account to you for our doings?" I cried angrily, and David said in a whisper:

"Be careful, Oliver, he has it in his power now to undo us both."

"And he will work the harm whether we give him soft words or harsh."

"Ay; but molasses is better for flies than vinegar, and by using it you may entangle them meanwhile."

I was at a loss to understand the meaning of David's remark, and had no time to ponder over it, for at the same instant Ben Stork cried threateningly :

"I shall warn the patrol that you are leaving the city to visit the American lines, and perhaps by the time they make prisoners of both you will understand how long since it had been that you must account to me for your doings. I have had my eye on you two rebels, and don't intend you shall remain free to carry matters with such high hands."

"I will go ashore and flog him," I said, hauling the boat around, and David whispered, a smile coming over his face which told me he had some plan in mind.

"Let me try the molasses first, Oliver, and mayhap then you will have a better opportunity for doing the flogging. Hold your peace while I make talk with the Tory."

I nodded my head without understanding his purpose, and straightway was astonished to hear him cry to the villainous cur on shore :

"There is no reason why you should set yourself to watch us, Ben Stork, for we are not now doing any more than we ever have done against the king; but if it so please you, come aboard."

"Now you are knuckling down to that Tory," I whispered angrily.

"It won't be for long, Oliver, so don't get your teeth on edge until the proper time comes; but pull in toward the shore."

"Where are your fish?" Ben demanded, now mystified by David's willingness to take him on as passenger.

"We haven't got any yet. It is less than

half an hour since we set out, and the fish are not biting hereabouts; but we will have better luck further up the river. Are you coming aboard?"

"You think to blind my eyes by appearing willing to have me for a companion after you had once refused."

"It is better we do so than that you should bring our fishing voyage to a close by calling on the Britishers," David said with a laugh. "It is seldom I have three or four hours to myself for such a purpose, and I am not minded to cut it short because of your suspicions. To be frank, Ben Stork, we are not inclined toward you as a companion; but are willing to pay the price for a spell, and what is more, you shall share in the food which we have brought with us."

I was inwardly raging at what seemed worse than stupidity in David.

Should we take this Tory aboard the voyage

must come to an end beyond a peradventure, for how could we get rid of him, more particularly if matters were made pleasant as my comrade suggested?

However, it was too late for me to interfere, since by this time the boat was at the shore and Ben Stork had laid hold of the gunwale.

He peered around suspiciously, looking here and there as if expecting to see that which would prove we were about to aid the "rebels," and David said impatiently:

"We are not minded to come ashore that you may overhaul us for your own curiosity. If it so be you think we are on other than a fishing voyage, come with us; else let go your hold there."

"I will do that when I please," the Tory cried defiantly, and I, unable to control my anger any longer, rose to my feet suddenly, shouting:

"You will do it now, you villain, or I'll break at least one of the bones in your worthless body!"

David had hold of me in an instant, literally forcing me back on the thwart as he said to Ben Stork:

"My comrade is right in being angry when you would thus play the part of customs officer without authority. If it so be you choose to come on board, as was first proposed, do so at once; but attempt to detain us here, and Oliver shall work his will."

Why David should be eager to take this fellow as a passenger I could not understand, and the bewilderment, together with anger, kept me silent; my mind was in such a state of confusion as prevented me from noting the Tory's movements.

He hesitated an instant as if to let go his hold on the boat, and then, most likely enjoying his fancied advantage, when it seemed as if

he had the whip-hand of us, he shoved the skiff off, at the same time leaping aboard.

"I'll go to make certain whether you are telling the truth or not."

"That's the proper way," David replied in a tone of perfect satisfaction, and added to me, "Pull heartily, Oliver, for the day is fast wearing away, and we shall have no sport if you loiter here."

There was more in his tone than his words to attract my attention, and straightway I understood that the lad had in his head some cunningly devised plan which would result in the confusion of the Tory; but what it was I could not so much as conjecture, for it seemed to me we thus lost our last opportunity of leaving the city on that day.

"You said that there was something on board to eat," Ben Stork began with the same friendly manner, and David replied laughingly:

"Ay, so there is; but it isn't to be touched until we are where we can get some fish."

"How far up the river are you counting on going?"

"Half a mile or more over on the other shore the fishing is good, and now since we have such an ardent Royalist on board there can be no reason why we should not venture that far from the city," David replied in a voice so mild that one would have thought he was speaking to his dearest friend, and so thick-headed was Ben Stork that he did not suspect any mischief was intended.

I began to have an inkling of what my comrade would do, and the thought of it was so satisfactory and amusing that I had great difficulty in keeping my face straight as I furthered his plans by pulling the best I knew how upstream, but constantly working, apparently without purposing to do so, toward the Jersey shore.

Ben's mind was on the food rather than his own position, and after he had asked several questions concerning it, David apparently relented, saying as he brought out the parcel:

"We will divide this into fair portions so there may be enough left for supper, because after fishing two or three hours one will need a hearty meal."

Ben fell-to innocently as any lamb, and I pulled on the oars as vigorously as was in my power until we were well over toward the Jersey shore, so far above the town that we no longer had any fear of being interrupted.

Then it was that for the first time Ben Stork began to realize perhaps it was not exactly safe for him to venture so far from home in a skiff manned by two "rebels," who had more than once plainly showed they felt no love for him.

"See here," he began blusteringly, when he suddenly discovered how far we were from

New York, "I shan't stand anything like this, you know."

"Anything like what?" David asked innocently.

"This going so far away. How do I know what you fellers are up to?"

"That is exactly what you came on board for, as I understand it. You intended to learn what we were about, and are in a fair way to gain the information."

"But I don't intend to go so far. There is as good fishing ground on the other side as here."

"But we preferred to try our luck on this shore. Now let us gather up the food lest some of it be wasted, and then we'll get the lines over."

David, who had been sitting aft, stepped on the thwart occupied by me and went toward Ben, as if expecting the Tory cur would give him such of the provisions as remained uneaten.

"I'll keep what I've got, and you may attend to turning back. Do you hear me? Put the boat around, for I'll not go any further!"

David stepped past me, and fearing lest he might upset the boat I moved further aft; but holding myself in readiness for that which I knew was about to take place.

"Now what are you fellows up to?" Ben Stork cried in a rage, and probably at that instant the first suspicion crept into his mind that he had shown himself to be an idiot.

"You had better keep your seat or the boat will be overturned," David said quietly. "It is our purpose to land on the Jersey shore, and since you were so eager to come we shall be forced to ask that you remain with us for a certain length of time."

Never did I see a lad's face change so suddenly as the Tory's at that moment.

Although slow of wit, he could not fail to understand that we had him within our power,

and must have known we should not handle him too gently; but yet he tried one more game at bullying.

"Turn this skiff back or I'll lodge information against you at once," he cried. "You will repent having acted the part of spies."

"Try not to lodge information against us until you get on shore, Ben Stork," David said laughingly, and the Tory showed that he had about as much courage in him as has a cornered rat, for he sprang up suddenly, aiming a blow full at my comrade's face.

If he had known David Rhinelanders better there would have been no idea in his mind of taking the lad by surprise, and hardly had he struck out before my comrade clutched him by the throat.

There was no reason for me to take part in the affray.

In fact it was quite necessary I should pay all my attention to preventing the skiff from

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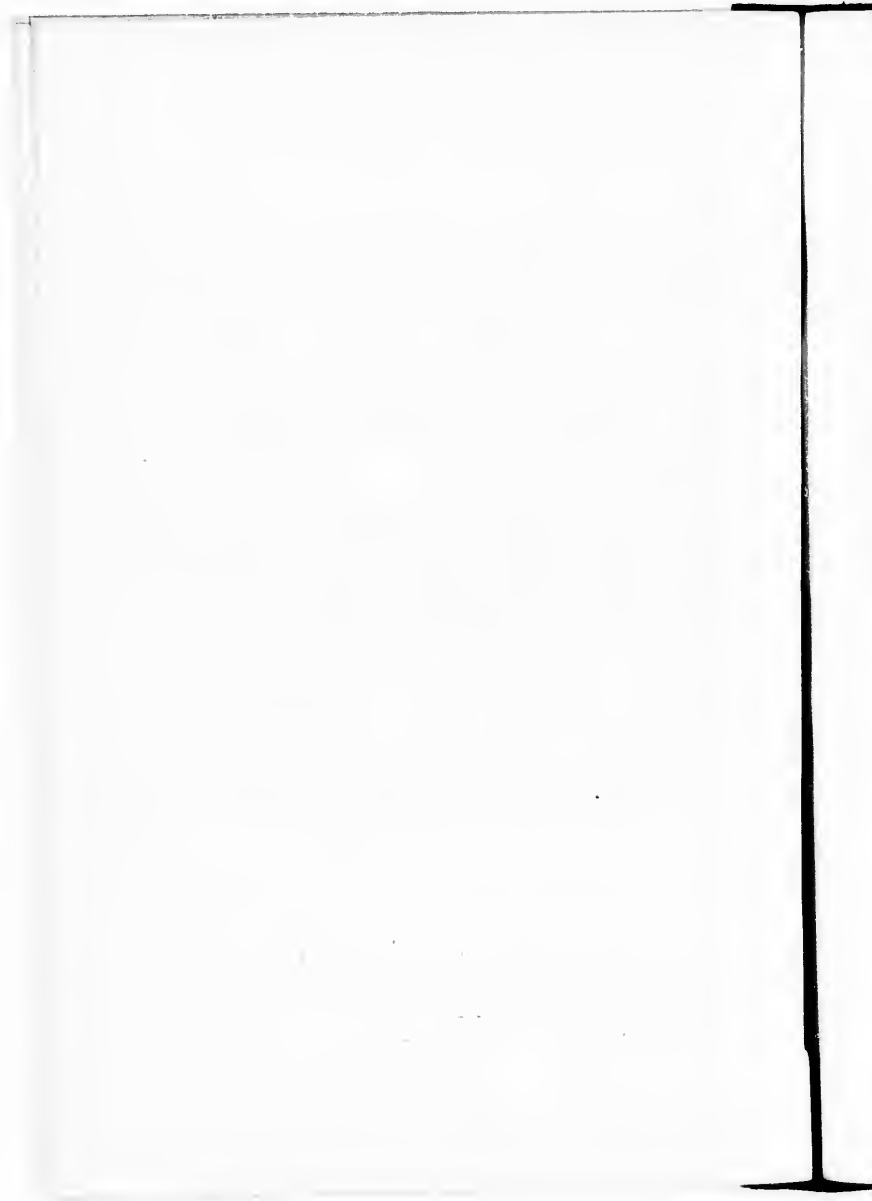
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DAVID NOW HAD HIS PRISONER SO NEARLY CHOKED HE WAS
UNDER SUBJECTION.—Page 101.



being overset, and I jumped here and there to counterbalance the movements of the two who were struggling in the bow, until David had his prisoner so nearly choked that he was under subjection.

"Give me something for a gag, Oliver," he said, "and pass forward that piece of rope from the stern. We must truss this fellow up in such fashion that he can neither move nor give the alarm, else we are not safe."

The rope I handed him as he desired; but could see nothing out of which a gag might be fashioned until I bethought myself of Ben's own coat, and this we stripped from him in a twinkling, stuffing a goodly portion of one sleeve into his mouth, and fastening it there in proper fashion.

Then I took up the oars, leaving to David the task of getting the prisoner into the bottom of the boat where he would not be so readily

seen by those on board passing craft, and asked as I rowed :

"Now that you have caught your fish, David, what do you count on doing with him?"

"There is but one course for us, so far as I can see, which is to carry him into the American camp. Had he been allowed his way we should yet be in New York, and if Major Lee can't care for this fellow a few weeks, why then the time has come when we must of a surety enter the American army so soon as we have captured the traitor who is lying under Sir Henry Clinton's wing."

CHAPTER V.

THE PRISONER.

THE adventure on which we had embarked promised all the danger and difficulty that the most venturesome could have desired, when it was first unfolded to us by Sergeant Champe; but at this moment, while we had a prisoner in the skiff and were yet many miles from the American lines, it appeared much as if it was increasing rapidly in magnitude.

Should we be overhauled by the Britishers while Ben Stork was on board, our position would be even more perilous than Master Schuster or the sergeant had counted on, and even at the moment of our triumph over the Tory I grew timorous again.

When his plan was fully carried out, and the Royalist cur lay helpless in the bottom of the skiff, David looked at me with a certain expression of pride on his face, which he had a good right to wear considering how neatly he trapped the scoundrel; but as the moments passed the same thoughts came into his mind which had already found lodgment in mine, and he began to appear disturbed.

It was to me as if he had spoken, and I answered the question I read in his eyes:

"We can only trust to chances, David Rhineland, for now are we so far upon the road which may lead to the gallows that there is no possibility of turning back."

"I understand that full well," he said impatiently, "and am not so simple as to think we may retreat even though we were so disposed; but that which troubles me most just now is as to what we are to do with this Tory bundle?"

"He must be taken with us, else we may make up our minds to taste of life on board the prison-ships if we venture into New York again."

"Once the journey on foot is begun he will hinder our movements to such an extent that we cannot hope to return according to promise."

"Yet must we hold him, unless you are of the mind to drop the cur overboard."

David's face grew pale at the idea of taking a human life in cold blood, and he answered quickly:

"That would be murder, Oliver Littlefield, and neither you nor I would do it, however great the stake for which we are playing."

"I did not suggest it; but said it is the only way by which we can rid ourselves of him. I have no question but that Major Lee will see to it he is not allowed to enter New York for some time; but he cannot always be held a prisoner, and we have shut ourselves out from

our homes so long as the Britishers remain in possession of New York."

David was silent while one might have counted ten, and then cried angrily :

"I could almost wish we had allowed him to prevent our coming up the river !"

"You do not mean all that. We had our duty to perform, and at such a time have no right to think of ourselves. It is not well that we speak further on the matter while his ears are open, lest we make him acquainted with our secret. What is done may not be recalled, and the only course now is to push forward with all speed to carry out the orders given."

Then, as the plainest way of putting an end to what was a needless conversation, I bent to the oars once more, rowing as I had never done before, and keeping the skiff well within the shadows of the Jersey shore.

David again took up his station in the stern that the little boat might be in better trim, and

steered with the paddle that our course might be the most direct.

Ben Stork lay on his back unheeded by us, and the oars were plied until I was so spent with toil that it seemed as if I could not pull another stroke.

Then David spoke for the first time in half an hour.

"Let me take your place, Oliver. By spelling each other we can continue to push ahead, and it should not be long now before the danger is passed."

"I allow that time has already come, at least until we set our faces homeward once more."

Then I changed seats with my comrade, and he worked the oars with even more vigor than I had done.

Neither of us gave thought to the provisions with which we had proposed to refresh ourselves.

It was as if the presence of our unwilling

passenger had taken from us all desire or thought, save to gain the American lines at the earliest possible moment.

When another quarter of an hour had passed I noticed that the prisoner was writhing as if in agony, and instantly came the fear that he might be stifling to death because of the gag, which may not have been properly fixed in his mouth.

"We must give him some attention," I said to David, after explaining what was in my mind; but he was not disposed to spend time in aiding Ben Stork.

"If he should stifle his death would be at our door as surely as if we had thrown him overboard," I said sharply, and then made my way forward regardless of the possibility that by so doing I might upset the light skiff.

It was but the work of a few seconds to take the coat-sleeve from the cur's mouth, and then I knew he had been very near death.

He gasped for breath, his face was of a dark hue, and the eyeballs protruded from their sockets.

My exclamation of fear brought David to his senses, and hastily drawing in the oars he joined me in the effort to give the Tory relief, although while thus trying to aid an enemy he cried nervously :

"It is destined the Tory villain shall bring trouble upon us, for even while saving his worthless life the redcoats may come !"

"It cannot be helped," I replied recklessly as I dashed water into the fellow's face. "Almost anything is better than that a murder be done by us."

Not until five minutes had passed did Ben Stork show signs of returning consciousness, and then David insisted that he should be dragged further aft, for while two of us were in the bow it was next to impossible to propel the boat.

"Lay the cur where we can have an eye on him without changing positions," he said, as he suited the action to his words. "We must not loiter here for such as he."

After this had been done David began rowing again, and I watched the Tory until he was recovered sufficiently to speak.

"You are bent on killing me!" he cried, and there was terror in his tones.

"We would do so rather than allow you to interfere with our plans," I answered, minded to have him believe we were really blood-thirsty. "You have taken it upon yourself to do the king's work and must not grumble if at times it causes pain or discomfort."

"It would be better to set me ashore, than do murder."

"Of that I am not so certain. However, there will be no murder done so long as you obey such orders as we may give."

"Why should I do anything of the kind?"

he cried angrily, grown bolder now it appeared that he was not to be killed off-hand.

"Because we are the masters now, and don't count on your spoiling our plans."

"Set me ashore or I will bring you to the gallows before this year has come to an end!" he screamed, and David cried sternly:

"Put the gag back in his mouth. We can't have him yelling at this rate, and must take the chances of his stifling."

This reduced Ben to submission instantly, and he cried for mercy, promising he would obey us strictly and to any length, if the torture was spared him.

"So long as you hold your peace, and do not attempt to so much as whisper, your mouth shall be left free," I said, not minded to run the chance of killing the cur. "If you make ever so little noise the coat-sleeve will be put in place again, not to be removed however near you may be to death."

I could see that this decision of mine did not please David.

He believed our safety demanded that Ben Stork be rendered powerless for harm of any kind, and mayhap he was in the right, yet I had not the heart to inflict needless torture on a prisoner.

After nearly half an hour more had passed, during which time not a word was spoken by either of us, David yielded up the oars to me, taking my place in the stern-sheets.

The night was now rapidly approaching, and with the coming of darkness the danger lessened.

In fact, I believed we no longer had any reason to fear meeting the Britishers, and counted that it was now only a question of endurance until we should gain that portion of the American lines where it was believed Lee's Legion was encamped.

The Tory had not so much as yipped from

the moment I threatened to replace the gag if he made the slightest outcry, and I felt certain we would have no trouble with him unless we suddenly came upon a party of redcoats, when I doubted not but that he would use his lungs to the best possible advantage.

There is no reason why I should set down here all we speculated upon in our minds, or spoke of during the hours which followed, for nothing of moment occurred until we were come to a point where we could see on the New York side of the river what both David and I believed were the camp-fires of our army.

Then we pulled quickly across; but before arriving within an hundred yards of the shore the sentries hailed us.

"We are but just come from New York, and would have speech with Major Henry Lee!" I cried, thinking to lose as little time as possible if it so chanced we were not yet come to the place where the Legion was encamped.

"What have you to do with him?" a voice from out the darkness asked, and it angered me that there should be in the Continental Army a man so stupid as to think a message of any nature whatsoever might be bawled from one to another at such a distance.

"We have business of the utmost importance with him, and I beseech you to give us speedy information of his whereabouts."

"Come ashore and let me have a look at you!"

I was about to make a hasty answer to this unsoldierly demand, when David raised his hand to command silence.

His ears, quicker than mine, had heard a voice reproving the sentry in sharpest tones, and an instant later some one whom I fancied was an officer cried:

"Major Lee is at this point!"

Fortune was most certainly beginning to smile upon us at last, and in such hearty fashion that I began to doubt if it could be possible we

had blundered upon the very place we most wished to find.

"You may come ashore and state your business," the same voice cried, impatient because of my delay in answering.

"Very well, sir," David replied, and then he pulled toward the shore, for it was his trick at the oars.

We were met at the water's edge by an officer and two men, and, motioning for David to keep his place in the boat, I leaped ashore, asking to speak privately with him who wore a sword.

When we had stepped a few paces away from the privates, I whispered that we had but just come from New York with a message of the utmost importance for Major Lee, and while getting away from the city had been forced to take a Tory prisoner.

The officer would have asked for more information; but I implored him to lose no time

in speaking with the major, and urged that that gentleman be requested to come to the shore, at least until I might make him acquainted with certain matters which should receive attention before we left the boat.

The officer was not disposed to grant what was an unusual request, if not downright impudence; but I pleaded earnestly, representing that David and I had more than once before risked our lives to bring information within the lines, until he finally consented, ordering the sentry to keep every one away from our craft until his return.

The major, who as a matter of course was momentarily expecting word from Sergeant Champe, answered the summons hastily on being informed that certain lads wished to speak with him, and from the moment of his arrival all our danger was passed for the time being.

I had but to whisper in his ear the name of

the man who had sent us, in order to insure his attention, and before opening the matter with which we had been charged, I begged that Ben Stork be carried into camp and kept securely until we could tell our story.

All was done as I desired, and then David and I, freed from the companionship of the hated Tory, followed Major Lee to his quarters, where in a very few moments we had repeated the message from the sergeant.

As was but natural, the major insisted on our telling him who we were, and I introduced David and myself by explaining what we had already done to aid the cause, referring him to General Sullivan as to the truth of the story.

This appeared to satisfy the gentleman as to our trustworthiness, and he questioned us closely regarding the sergeant's doings.

After giving him down to the minutest detail all we had heard or what we ourselves saw, he was pleased to say :

"You lads have taken upon yourselves a dangerous task; but I can promise you rich reward if it be successful."

"We have not entered into the business for the sake of what profit may come out of it, but to serve the Continental Army; and now that Ben Stork knows somewhat of our work I venture to say our necks are in nearly as much danger as the sergeant's."

"You need have no present fear of him. I will undertake to keep the Tory where he can do no mischief until this work be completed and your safety is assured."

Then the major would have us repeat again the plan which the sergeant had proposed to carry out, and when I had told for the second time how it was proposed to capture the traitor, he said:

"You may tell him that I myself will be on the Jersey side of the river with such an escort as will insure the traitor's being brought into

our camp. I shall wait there for him until daylight, and if it so chance his plan miscarries, he must send word as to when the next attempt is to be made."

"That would cause a delay of at least three more days, sir," I ventured to suggest. "Would it not be well to say you would come to the rendezvous on the next night also, unless word should be brought to the contrary meanwhile."

"Ay, lad, that is a happy thought, and we will so arrange it. You say the sergeant has been forced to enlist?"

"He believed the plot would be more certain of success if he did so, and signed the rolls yesterday morning."

"Well, what is done cannot be undone," the major said after a brief pause. "I do not think there need be more said between us. You are to remain in camp until morning, and then make your way to the city. I will remind you of the fact, although there is little need lads of

your experience should be warned, that the sergeant's name is not to be spoken here."

I made bold to ask if none of his comrades suspected the true state of affairs, and was told that among all the men none had the slightest idea but that the sergeant had gone over to the enemy in good truth.

"It is of course to be regretted that so gallant a soldier should be dishonored in the eyes of his comrades even for a brief period," the major said regretfully ; "but if all goes well in the city the truth can be made known in a few hours, and he will have no reason to complain of his reception when he takes his place in the Legion once more."

I fancied Major Lee would be pleased if the interview was brought to a speedy close now the business was concluded, and that he talked thus kindly with us through courtesy rather than from desire, therefore suggested that we had best take our leave.

To this he assented by calling a soldier to provide us with quarters during the night, and soon we were lying on the straw in a sort of shed which had been put up as a shelter for the troops at this point.

However sleepy we might be, there was no opportunity for rest until we had satisfied the curiosity of the men who were awakened by our entrance, after they learned from him who conducted us that we had lately arrived from New York, and it seemed to me before the questioning was brought to an end that the day must have fully come.

However, we found time for a nap 'twixt then and morning, and at sunrise were making ready to set our faces homeward.

Generous rations were served us, and we were yet at breakfast when summoned to Major Lee's quarters.

As was shown, this had been done simply through courtesy, and as he bade us farewell,

promising that both David and I should be given a place in his troop whenever we decided to enter the army, I asked to see our prisoner, explaining that I simply wanted to be certain he could not readily make his escape.

"With so much at stake you may rest easy that he will not be given a chance to leave us," he said with a smile, and at the same time gave orders that we be taken to where the Tory was confined.

Ben Stork was in a small building which served the purpose of guardhouse, having been once used, I should guess, as a woodshed, and although there were no less than two soldiers on guard, it did not appear to me that he was any too secure.

We made no attempt to speak with the cur; but after looking in on him went at once to our boat, and when we were rowing down the river David said questioningly :

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BEN STORK WAS IN A SMALL BUILDING WHICH SERVED THE
PURPOSE OF A GUARDHOUSE.—Page 122.



"It is in your mind that the Tory may get away?"

"If I was in his place I should not stay in that shanty four-and-twenty hours."

"So that strict guard be kept I fail to see how he might give them the slip."

"One who bent all his energies to the task could accomplish it, of that I feel confident," was my reply, and then I fell to speculating as to what might come to David and me, if Ben Stork should suddenly appear in New York while we were yet engaged in the plot.

My comrade had greater faith in the security of the makeshift for a jail than I and there was no good reason why I should try to shake his faith, for under such belief he was content in mind, and it was better he had no additional cause for worryment.

As we pulled leisurely down stream, reserving our strength in case it should suddenly

become necessary to out-row the enemy, we decided that it would be safest to leave the skiff a mile or more above the ropewalk, and make our way across the country until arriving at the Boston Road.

Approaching the city from that direction there would be less reason for suspicion on the part of those we might meet than if we had been within the American lines.

We were right secure in mind, for since having been halted by Ben Stork fortune had favored us so grandly that it seemed certain we should complete this portion of our task without mishap, and pulled toward the city as if bringing a pleasure-trip to a close.

When, at about noon, we were arrived near, by where it had been proposed to land, and I was looking around for a favoring place in which to conceal the skiff, we saw a boat put out from the shore as if to meet us.

I was at the oars, and, therefore, could not

see what was ahead without turning; but David warned me of all he saw.

"Is it a redcoat?" I asked nervously.

"I cannot say—he wears no coat."

"We surely have no need to fear one man, and——"

David's face paled so suddenly that I ceased speaking and rowing at the same time, while I stared at him in alarm.

"What has come over you, lad?" I asked as he remained silent, much as if having lost all power over his tongue.

"He who is putting out from the shore can be none other than Jethro Stork!"

Instantly I pulled the boat around three or four points, in the vain hope we might pass him, and asked in a whisper:

"Has he taken note of us, do you think?"

"Ay, and is rowing this way. Ben's parents have become alarmed because he did not

return home last night, and Jethro is out searching for him, most likely."

"He can have no idea we know aught concerning the cur."

"I would we were certain of that! Who shall say we were not observed when he came on board?"

This suggestion was enough to send the cold chills of fear down my spine, and I turned my head ever so slightly to look at one who might prove a more dangerous enemy than ever Ben could be.

CHAPTER VI

SUSPENSE.

It needed but one glance at this representative of the Stork family to convince me he had put out from the shore for the sole purpose of intercepting us, and my courage suddenly oozed away at my fingers' ends as I realized he must have learned something of our meeting with Ben the day previous, else he would not be approaching with such a confident manner.

"We are undone," David said hopelessly, and I could have echoed the words, but did not, lest by so doing I should discourage myself.

To continue on down the stream in the hope of avoiding Jethro Stork would be folly, since he could easily cut us off, and it would have

been a confession of guilt to have deliberately run away, therefore it only remained for us to meet him with as good grace as possible, which was much the same as none at all.

"Which of you lads is called Oliver Littlefield?" young Stork asked while he was yet a dozen yards or more away, and I determined to put a brave face on the matter, however cowardly I might be at heart, as I replied:

"I am he."

"Where did you leave Benjamin?"

For an instant I was tempted to deny having seen his brother, and then, luckily, came the thought that since he knew my name so well it must be he had gotten definite information concerning our movements of yesterday, and I made answer without apparent delay:

"Up the river a short distance."

"Why did he not remain with you?"

"Because we wouldn't sail the boat to please him, I suppose."

"Do you know he hasn't returned at his home?"

By this time Jethro was alongside, and I forced myself to look surprised as I repeated:

"Not returned home!"

"Know you aught of him since yesterday?" and young Stork looked me sharply in the face.

"I know he wished to join us in a fishing excursion; but shortly after we started from the ropewalk he insisted on being put ashore."

Thus far I had answered his questions without telling that which was false, although I must confess to have acted the lie; but it was necessary if we would save our own lives, or so it seemed to me at the moment, and I was prepared to go even to greater length than I had done.

Fortunately, however, Jethro Stork took it into his head to bully us, not as I now think because he had any idea we were keeping

certain matters secret, but it was his disposition ever to override those weaker than himself.

"Be careful what kind of a story you tell me, because I am in a position to make matters very uncomfortable if you attempt to deceive," he began with a swagger, and I looked him full in the eye without replying.

Silence was the best course at this time.

"Why did you tempt my brother to embark on this craft?" he cried furiously, and I replied, speaking earnestly now because it was the absolute truth:

"It was not in my mind that he should do so. David and I both were opposed to having a passenger on board so small a craft; but he insisted, declaring he would give notice that we had left the city to enter the American lines, unless we did as he desired. Therefore, rather than lose an opportunity for fishing, we took him on, and it was with positive relief I saw him go ashore."

"But where is he now?" Jethro persisted, losing, however, some of his swagger.

"That he can best tell. We had no further concern regarding him after he left us."

"How far up the river have you been?"

"Perhaps two miles."

"Where did you sleep last night?"

"In a hut by the riverside."

"And you have neither seen nor heard anything of Benjamin since you started down the river?"

"No," I replied, decidedly, not thinking it necessary to state that just before setting out we had seen the villainous Tory.

Young Stork had his hand on the gunwale of our boat, and after this last reply of mine remained silent two or three minutes as if revolving some plan in his mind, thus causing us much mental anxiety.

I doubted not but that he was deliberating whether it would be well to carry us before a

magistrate on the charge of being concerned in his brother's disappearance, which would have been almost as bad as to have accused us of being spies.

I dared not attempt to leave him lest he should understand how eager we were to part company ; but sat there inwardly quaking as I looked him full in the face, until he finally said threateningly :

"I shall know where to find you, Oliver Littlefield, in case Benjamin does not return home this day."

"And in case he does not, how are we to be held responsible? He was never a friend of ours, and since it must have been that some one saw him take passage with us, the same person can tell you how unwilling we were to make him one of the party."

It was evident from the expression on Stork's face that he was already aware of such fact, and

instead of continuing his threats he asked sharply, looking toward David :

"What is the name of your comrade?"

Before I could reply my companion answered readily as an innocent lad should :

"David Rhinelanders."

Then the bully loosened his hold on our skiff, and it could plainly be seen that he was perplexed.

I rowed leisurely away from young Stork, not daring to bend all my strength to the oars lest he should grow suspicious, and it was with a sense of deepest relief that I saw him head his boat up the river.

Not until we were separated by a great stretch of water did either of us two speak, and then David said grimly :

"We are like to come to grief through these promising members of the Stork family, since if one does not appear to charge us with carrying him into the Continental camp a prisoner,

the other will accuse us of having done some bodily injury."

"The day is rapidly approaching when our mothers will urge that we enlist, instead of objecting to our doing so," I said with a laugh in which there was no mirth, for it seemed that we were being so compassed around by enemies as to render it impossible we could aid the sergeant in his plot.

This same thought was in David's mind also, for he said half to himself:

"To-morrow night is the time fixed for the sergeant's work, and it is well the hour be so near at hand."

"Whether the attempt is a success or a failure, we had best not be found in the city on the morning of the 6th of November, and in that case it is necessary we make our arrangements for departure at once, since there is like to be little time to-morrow for our own matters."

In reading over what I have just set down it appears much as if I had utterly failed in thus trying to describe our position, although perhaps it is of little consequence, since in the plot conceived by the commander-in-chief our parts were so small that they could have been readily performed by almost any one.

However, the situation seemed to us of greatest moment, and we gave little heed to the more important work as we strove to devise some way out of the tangle into which we had been plunged.

Because of the coming of Jethro Stork we landed further down on the shore than was at first intended, pulling our skiff amid the bushes hardly a quarter of a mile above the ropewalk, and then set out at full speed across the country, hoping to gain Master Schuster's office before he should have gone home for the night.

In this last we were happily successful, although it taxed our powers of endurance to

the utmost, for not a halt was made as we sped across the island.

The sun was yet half an hour high in the heavens when we presented ourselves to David's uncle, and learned from the expression on his face that he was by no means pleased because of our coming.

"You have returned from up the river?" he asked in a whisper, motioning that we should go from the office into the wareroom toward that corner, where once before we had been secreted from view of any who might enter.

"We are just come back," David made reply, and then he would have told of what had befallen us but that Master Schuster interrupted impatiently:

"And did you perform your mission?"

"Ay, sir," I replied, quivering with impatience because he delayed us in the telling of our story. "Listen to David, Master Schuster, for it is important you should hear at once that

which he has to tell, and then we will depart, leaving you to decide on our future course."

I fancy at that moment the worthy merchant regretted most deeply he had ever concerned himself in this plot to make a prisoner of the traitor; for he betrayed fear in every movement and gesture.

David gave no heed to this, however, but straightway plunged into the story, telling it with the fewest words, yet at the same time making plain all the dangers which menaced us.

If Master Schuster had been troubled before he was certainly in great distress of mind when the tale had been concluded, and such evidence of uneasiness on his part did not tend to render David and I more courageous.

When the position of affairs was such that he, who was in little danger as compared with us, was seriously alarmed, we might well be excused for displaying the greatest terror.

It pleases me, however, to be able to say that timorous although we both were, Master Schuster could never have guessed it from our faces as we stood before him waiting for his advice.

"It is a most perplexing business," he finally said. "At present I can see in it but one course, which is for you to return to the American lines as soon as may be, and there enlist."

"Of course you mean, sir, after we have done what we may toward aiding the sergeant in his work?" I ventured to say, and to my great surprise Master Schuster replied impatiently:

"I mean that it is necessary to leave the city without delay. I can repeat to the sergeant what you have told me, which will suffice for him. You must take measures for your own safety."

"That we cannot do, sir, until after completing the task in which we engaged," I said with more of courage in my voice than was in my

heart, yet at the same time was I determined to carry out the work regardless of the hazard to ourselves.

"You can be of little assistance if Jethro Stork lodges information against you, as doubtless he will."

"But the time is set for to-morrow night, and he can hardly accomplish very much toward our undoing 'twixt now and then," David added.

Master Schuster suddenly looked around him as if fearing some enemy was about to appear and work harm; but seeing none he turned again to us as if we had offended seriously.

"You shall go your own way, and get out of the difficulty as best you can, if my advice be not heeded."

"No, sir," I ventured to remonstrate. "You are bounden to aid us so far as you may, since we embarked in the adventure through your counsel."

"And how can I render aid when you are determined to go your own way?"

"That may be done, sir, by acquainting our mothers with the full reasons why we must enlist, for I question whether we would be safe in visiting our homes this night. If you are pleased to do that, sir, we will take care of the rest so far as we may."

I believe the worthy merchant was greatly relieved at learning that we demanded no more of him, for he readily promised to do as I had requested, agreeing to visit our mothers within the hour.

But he offered neither money nor advice when we took our leave of him to go in search of Sergeant Champe.

"Uncle Jacob is credited with having much love for the cause," David said grimly when we were out of the merchant's office, walking toward Broad Way; "but I question if his love for self be not far greater. He is

ready to serve the American people when he may do so without fear of injuring Jacob Schuster either in a private or a business way."

It was not seemly for me to say anything in disparagement of my comrade's uncle, although his was the right to do so, if he pleased, and I held my peace, turning over in mind meanwhile such plans as could be devised on the moment for our own safety while we carried out our portion of the plot.

When we were come near the ruins of Trinity Church I saw the sergeant, who I had no doubt was abroad with the hope of meeting us, and instantly he turned into the churchyard where we had once before conversed in safety, I knew we were observed.

"Now we shall speedily settle this portion of our work, and mayhap have time for attending to our own matters," I said to David in as cheery a tone as I could muster, and he, not to

be outdone by my pretense of carelessness, replied with a laugh :

"We shall be cared for in some fashion or other before many hours have passed."

Then we were near to the sergeant, who gazed at us with earnest inquiry in his eyes.

"We have carried your message, and bring the reply that all will be done as you request. At the same time we took it upon ourselves to say that if the adventure failed to-morrow night, your friends should be at the rendezvous the next evening, unless in the meantime other word had been sent them."

"It was well thought of, although I fear much that if it miscarries this time we shall have little opportunity of making a second attempt, for the American Legion is under orders to begin the southern campaign without loss of time."

"Do you mean that Arnold is like to leave the city soon?" I cried incautiously loud, and

the sergeant silenced me with a gesture as he replied :

"Ay, lad, as soon as may be, so it is said in the barracks ; but we will not look further ahead than to-morrow night. Have you other news to tell me ? If not, we had best separate to meet again in this place two hours after sunset to-morrow."

"All that we have of information concerns ourselves, and because we repeat it now do not think that either of us is of the mind to turn back from the work agreed upon. It is well you should know how we are threatened, since it may cause some change in your own plans."

Then I told him the story of the journey up the river, and of the meeting with Jethro Stork, whereat he was instantly plunged into deep thought, not after the same fashion as Master Schuster, but with the air of one who racks his brain to devise how he may be of assistance.

"You must enter the army at once," he finally said, and David replied with a laugh :

"Ay, sir, that much we know, and are of the mind to set forth before sunrise on the sixth day of November. It is on what we shall do in the meanwhile that we should have advice."

"Master Schuster should be able to counsel you in that matter."

"Uncle Jacob *should* be able to ; but he is not willing. We have just come from him, and even though he be my relative, I have no hesitation in saying that he would wash his hands of the whole business if it were possible, so cowardly has he grown with this new danger threatening."

"I am not surprised," Sergeant Champe said half to himself. "The worthy merchant has never seemed to me like one ready to venture much if it so be his property or person might be injured thereby, yet the keeping of two lads for four-and-twenty hours should not have caused him great annoyance or distress."

Then he would have us repeat to him the conversation we held with the merchant, and when we had done so, said with a confident air, which heartened me wonderfully :

"It is fortunate that we have one other here of stronger stuff, upon whom we may call. I told you in explaining the situation of affairs that I was recommended to two persons, one of whom I did not name. It is Master Baldwin of Newark with whom I am to have speech this night, unless it so chance fortune goes against us. It appears to me you lads can do no better than remain in hiding near about this ruin until one shall approach who speaks the word 'Newark.' Such a man you may be certain is our friend, and he will take it upon himself to look after your safety until the time agreed upon to rendezvous here. If, however, I should fail in meeting him, then may you expect to see me again this night."

The sergeant did not spend further time in

explanations, but hurried away like one bent on carrying out his own purposes, and much of the anxiety was instantly gone from David's mind and mine because of the heartiness with which the Virginian had espoused our cause.

"I would that to-night had been set for the attempt to capture the traitor," David said when we were alone. "Imperiled as we are, and about to incur yet greater danger, the suspense is worse than action."

"Yet it must be borne, and instead of allowing ourselves to dwell upon that which can only tend to make cowardly, let us picture what we will do after becoming members of the Continental Army."

"The picture had best be drawn when we are concealed from view," David said with a laugh. "I am not minded to stay here in the open lest the patrol take us in hand."

There was no lack of opportunities for concealment, and once we were where it was

possible to have a view of any one who might approach from either street we comforted and encouraged ourselves by speaking of the future when we had enlisted, and never allowing the conversation to venture on any nearer time than that.

When we left the skiff in the woods just above the ropewalk, I stuffed in my pocket that which was left of the food David purchased the day previous, and now it formed our supper.

After the meal had been eaten, and when we had speculated upon our possible military careers until the subject was grown stale, we relapsed into silence, and it seemed to me the morning must be come before any one approached our hiding-place.

Then it was that, as nearly as could be distinguished in the faint light of the moon, a gentleman of middle age, with a long beard, came toward the ruins, looked about cautiously, and as if satisfying himself there was no one in

the vicinity, spoke the single word "Newark," sufficiently loud for us to hear him.

Whereat David and I uprose, thankful that the time of waiting had come to an end, whatever of evil might be in store, and the manner in which this stranger greeted us seemed all the more warm as compared with the reception we had received from Master Schuster.

He did not display petulance because we were run into danger, nor counsel that we flee the city without attempting to do what had become our duty, but asked if we were cold or hungry.

"We might be warmer, sir," I replied, feeling instinctively that this was one who could be depended upon as a friend; "but our hunger has been more than half-appeased by that which we brought with us."

"I am told you lads have always lived in the city?"

"Ay, sir; we were born here," I replied.

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A GENTLEMAN WITH A LONG BEARD CAME TOWARD THE RUINS
AND SPOKE THE WORD "NEWARK."—Page 148.

Orange Street nearabout the tanyards on the Boston Road?"

"That we can, sir, if it so be your pleasure to go there."

"Say rather if it be your pleasure, lad, for I would secure shelter for you with one who may be relied upon, and who lives on that street. I am told it is not well for you to venture home."

"So it seems to us, sir; but peradventure you think we are over-timid regarding what Jethro Stork may do, we are willing to make the venture, for, as you may suppose, we had rather be under our mothers' roof than any other."

"I think more than like the brother of your prisoner would seek you out 'twixt this and morning, therefore, that you may be spared for to-morrow night's work, it will be well to follow me, at as smart a pace as you can set, for the night is grown late, and the gentlemen of the patrol are given to much curiosity."

CHAPTER VII.

UNWELCOME TIDINGS.

MASTER BALDWIN gave us to understand we were to lead the way to Orange Street, from which I guessed he was a stranger in the city, although it seemed odd that one who lived so near at hand should not be thoroughly well acquainted with all the streets in New York.

However, that was of no moment, and David and I, on either side of the gentleman, walked up Broad Way to the Common, where we took a short cut across, not so much to save distance as to avoid meeting unwelcome travelers.

It was as if the Britishers had no patrols out this night, for although on the alert constantly from the time of leaving the ruins of Trinity

Church until arrived at this house where he said his friend lived, we saw nothing more disagreeable in the form of a redcoat than a few soldiers who were lounging about the streets, evidently without purpose, and had one of us been Sir Henry Clinton himself we could not have made our way with less impediment.

Master Baldwin was not so reckless as to engage us in conversation while we were in the open air, and we continued the walk in silence.

Once arrived at the house of which he spoke we entered without ceremony, and it seemed much as if our coming had been anticipated.

David and I were introduced to the master of the premises, whose name was Ledyard, a brother, so I have since been told, to that Ledyard who owned the pottery nearabout the Common, and he immediately bade us welcome as if we had been old friends.

Master Baldwin made no hesitation about asking for supper, and while the meal was

being prepared we three were given a room to ourselves, Master Ledyard explaining that it might be well we did not remain with the family lest peradventure some of the neighbors, of whom many were Tories, should enter unexpectedly.

Therefore it was that while thus waiting for the meal we had an opportunity of conversing upon the matter in hand, and it seemed to me only natural Master Baldwin should ask for an account of the doings which had brought us into such peril.

There was no reason why we should not explain everything down to the minutest detail, knowing as we did that the gentleman was such a friend to the cause that he had been trusted with the secret of Sergeant Champe's coming, and surely we might confide in him our poor secret.

"Save for the fact that it will cause your mothers distress of mind, I see no good reason

why you lads should be downcast," the kindly gentleman said in an encouraging tone after our story had been told. "It is almost certain the brother of that lad whom you made prisoner will lay charges against you, since Benjamin was probably last seen in your company; but the time for the grand plot is so near at hand that you may safely take part in it, and yet have ample opportunity to make your escape. More than that, in case the plot be successful, then is the way plain for you to join the American forces. If it fails, row up the river as you did before, and I cannot see why you should give yourselves any uneasiness concerning the matter, save on behalf of your mothers. Is Master Jacob Schuster one who will speak the right word at the right time when he goes to your homes?"

"Under different circumstances I would say he might, sir," was my reply; "but now he is grown so timorous, fearing lest the slight share

he has had in the plot may prove his undoing, that I fear he will set the matter in such light as to make it appear more serious than really is the case."

"That much at least may be remedied, and at once. If it be your pleasure I will go to your homes this night and do what I may toward comforting those who are sorrowing without great cause."

There was nothing the gentleman could have said to give me greater pleasure than this, for he had so heartened David and me that I knew his visit would bring cheer to the widows who were most likely by this time mourning the loss of their only sons.

I would have been glad could he have set out at once in order to arrive there before the night should be well advanced; but we could not well ask him to sacrifice his supper in our behalf, therefore were forced to content ourselves until the proper time should come,

although it seemed as if the women folks in Master Ledyard's home were wonderfully slow about their work.

Then it was that Master Baldwin told us how it chanced he had been concerned in this plot which was being carried out by Sergeant Champe.

He had made the acquaintance of Major Henry Lee at a time when it was possible for him to render signal service to the cause, and thus proved himself a friend of the colonies, therefore the major had first applied to him, and afterward to David's uncle.

"I am surprised that Master Schuster should grow so faint-hearted before there is any great danger, considering the fact that he eagerly snatched at the bait which was offered, and while I accepted the same terms, it was not wholly because of the money and property to be received that I agreed to do what might be within my power."

"Was Uncle Jacob to be paid for aiding Sergeant Champe?" David asked in surprise, and I was dumfounded to think that the man who had claimed to be such a friend to the cause should have agreed to take payment for his services, however arduous they might be.

"Ay, that he was, lad, for I repeated at Major Lee's request the same proposition which was made me, and it is no secret. If the plot succeeds each of us is to receive one hundred guineas in lawful coin, five hundred acres of land, and three negroes—not a small amount for what service you say should be rendered without thought of payment."

"It is large, indeed!" David exclaimed, as if bewildered by the magnitude of the amount. "One hundred guineas, five hundred acres of land, and three negroes! Why, Uncle Jacob need not have begrudged us the shelter of his wareroom a few hours."

"True, lad, true; but Master Jacob Schuster is a careful man, and when learning you had run your noses into difficulty, or that it so seemed, he immediately feared harm would come to him through you. I venture to say at the moment it was as if his house or his lands were already being taken away from him in the name of the king because of disloyalty. However, there is no reason why we should discuss that now. Doubtless you are well satisfied with the reward promised you?"

"There was no mention of such a thing, sir," I said sharply. "I question whether we had been so hot to do the work if anything had been promised."

"But your portion was to be what I fancy lads like you are most eager to have—rapid promotion in the army so soon as you shall have learned the trade of a soldier."

"Who promised such a thing?" David asked sharply.

"Major Lee. I repeated his words to your Uncle Jacob."

"But yet he made no mention of it to us."

"Perhaps he wanted the better to prove your loyalty."

"Perhaps he did," David replied with a curling lip, and I knew there was in his mind thoughts concerning Master Schuster like unto those which I entertained; but we had no opportunity just then for comparing notes, because at that moment Master Ledyard entered the room to say that our supper was prepared.

Despite the fact that we were in danger of losing our liberty, perhaps our lives—despite the sorrow into which we knew our mothers were plunged because of us, we thoroughly enjoyed the meal in Master Ledyard's home.

It was generous in quantity, cooked nearly as well as if my mother had superintended it, and of such variety that to David and me it seemed

even more of a feast than that which we had enjoyed at the sign of the Black Horse.

While we were busy at the table, and the master of the house kept us in countenance by seeming to eat also, I am ashamed to confess that there was little in my mind save the satisfaction of the present moments, and even at this date, after having sat at more bountifully spread but not more hospitable boards, I look back on that meal given in charity as one of the most pleasant half-hours of my life.

When the supper was ended Master Baldwin set forth on his errand of mercy, and David and I went at once to the chamber which had been prepared for us, since it was not safe, as we had before been assured, to remain where the neighbors might by chance have come upon us.

As has already been set down, our sleep on the previous night was not prolonged, and during six-and-thirty hours we had had such exercise and passed through such experiences as

had fatigued us, consequently we fell asleep even while saying to ourselves that we would remain awake until Master Baldwin should return.

Therefore, not until the sun had risen next morning did we learn of the gentleman's doings in our behalf.

As we had supposed, he found our mothers in great grief, both of them in my home, where Mrs. Rhinelanders had come for sympathy in her trouble, and it was his opinion that Master Schuster acted the part of one who bears evil tidings, rather than a friend who would search in his mind for words of consolation.

I can well fancy how cheered these two grief-stricken widows were after Master Baldwin had set forth the facts in the case, belittling the danger and enlarging upon the advantages which would be ours from enlisting at such a time.

Certain it is he did not fail to set great stress

upon the probability that we ourselves might, a few months later, if checked now, insist upon entering the army, when the opportunities for advancement would be far less than if we went hot-foot from this plot which had been conceived by the commander-in-chief.

In short, Master Baldwin assured us, and I had no question as to the truth of the statement, that he had left our mothers in a reasonably cheerful frame of mind, and he repeated to us their parting words, for it was decided we should not return home before leaving the city.

It can well be imagined how much more comfortable in mind David and I were after hearing this news, and the future now looked as bright as it had dark.

It was decided that we should remain in this place of refuge until after sunset, Master Baldwin taking it upon himself to have speech with Sergeant Champe before the day was come to an end, when we would know if any change

was to be made in the proposed order of events.

Then we were left alone, since even in the hours of daylight it was not considered safe for us to take the chances of being seen by any of the neighbors, and until late in the afternoon we saw no person, save when dinner was brought in to us.

Then Master Baldwin appeared, and before he so much as opened his mouth I knew he brought unwelcome tidings.

I feared they were concerning my mother, and never so much as thought of Jethro or Ben Stork, for during the past twelve hours it had been to me as if they never had an existence.

"You bring us bad news, Master Baldwin," I said as if unable to wait until it should be his pleasure to speak.

"You have a keen eye, lad, if you can read it in my face, for there is yet a doubt whether it be bad, although it cannot be good. Ben

Stork has escaped from the camp near Dobb's Ferry."

"Escaped!" I exclaimed in dismay.

"Ay, lad. Last night at about eleven o'clock it was learned that he had in some way, whether by assistance from such of our people as are traitorously inclined, or some one on the outside, it is impossible to say, broken jail, and so cleverly was it done that no trace could be found of him."

"Then we are undone indeed!" I exclaimed, overwhelmed by the information, for once that Tory cur reached New York he would lay before Sir Henry Clinton all he knew of our being in communication with the American Army, and the hue and cry must be raised immediately afterward.

"I debated some time as to whether it would be well to tell you this thing, lads," Master Baldwin said thoughtfully; "but after giving the matter due reflection I said to myself that

these boys are brave, and a brave man is best armed when he knows all that awaits him. I fail to see how the escape may affect you, since it has already been agreed upon that you were to join the army this night."

"But we may be taken in custody even as we leave the house," I interrupted.

"I question if there be any danger of that, since no one can know where you are, and the only risk to be run is while crossing the city. Surely to lads who are well acquainted hereabouts that should be a reasonably simple matter."

"But one of us must go above the ropewalk to get the boat, and Jethro Stork may, by watching, have learned that we landed at that point."

"The same idea has come into my mind, and been provided for. Because of the prisoner's escape the plans for this night are changed somewhat. I have brought a boat to the foot

of Crown Street, where she is now made fast. David has simply to get on board and keep her afloat until our coming. It was proposed for you to stand guard in the alley, where several palings of the fence have been so far detached that a slight blow will throw them off, while I was to lay in wait with the sergeant to seize the traitor. Now, however, the parts are to be reversed ; you taking mine and I yours."

"Am I to aid in seizing General Arnold?" I cried in astonishment.

"Are you afraid?"

"Not of what can come to me ; but that I may not be equal to the task."

"I venture to say you will perform it as well as I. If all goes as we hope, he must be taken by surprise, and the sergeant should be able to manage the matter alone, were it necessary. Now, as has just been arranged, you two lads will remain here until ten o'clock, when you are to go to the foot of Crown Street, where

David is to remain in the boat, and you, Oliver, make your way to the garden in the rear of the traitor's lodgings. At that point Sergeant Champe may be found. Do you understand the plan fully?"

I repeated the brief instructions to make certain there was no mistake, and Master Baldwin buttoned his coat around him as if to take his departure.

"Do you go so soon, sir?" David asked.

"There are many possibilities to be guarded against, and it is well I be stirring."

"Before going will you kindly tell us how you learned that Ben Stork had made his escape?"

"It was a simple matter. I have been in communication with Major Lee for some time, and instantly he learned that the prisoner was missing a messenger started for my home that I might bring you the news."

"But you were not there, sir."

"True; my wife, who is known to be a good patriot, received the messenger in my stead, and immediately visited New York as if to sell chickens and eggs. Fortunately I met her on Bowling Green, where she was staring about as if struck with admiration of all she saw, and a few words sufficed to put me in possession of the facts. Now, lads, nothing remains for the success of the plot but to guard against a possible failure. Remain here until the time set; do not allow yourselves to dwell upon the disagreeables which may happen, for such thoughts only serve to dispirit you. Say that we shall succeed; keep your courage up, and when the hour arrives set forth full in the belief that we shall ferry the arch traitor across to the Jersey side this night."

Then the good man took us each by the hand, after which he went his way; but despite the advice he had given we could not prevent ourselves from indulging in gloomy thoughts.

How we passed the hours from the time he left us until Master Ledyard announced that the clock was on the point of striking ten, I do not know.

My mind was in such a whirl that I could hardly have said whether a full day had not been spent, so wearisomely did the moments drag.

It was a blessed relief to know the time was at last come when we should be at work, and we sprang to our feet joyously.

During the tedious waiting we had decided how we might best reach our posts of duty, and this simple plan we hit upon:

We were to make our way from the corner of Orange Street to the Boston Road. Then through the negroes' burying-ground, and from there down the upper part of Broad Way until we were come to Veseys Street, after which the course would be along the water-front.

Leaving David in the boat, I was to make

my way as best I might to the rendezvous, and here we were both convinced the greatest peril threatened ; but it could not be avoided, and must be met bravely.

It was a grewsome tramp through the burying-ground, and mayhap but for the many other disagreeable matters in our minds, we might have feared to venture among the graves, for it was said more than one ghost had been seen in that place.

Terrifying though the spectacle might be, I felt then that we would be safer in the presence of a disembodied spirit than standing face to face with Jethro Stork, and in that I believe David was agreed.

However, we saw neither one nor the other, and, thanks to the lateness of the hour and the unfrequented streets through which we passed, we met no person until we were on Veseys Street, when two drunken sailors lurched this way or that on a course such as I was convinced

would speedily bring them into the arms of the patrol.

On the water-front we were nearly as fortunate. At all events, no person challenged our right to be abroad, and we gained the boat without mishap.

It was well she should be kept afloat in case we were pursued after our work was done, or had miscarried, and I aided David in pushing off from the shore, after which, without one single word of farewell, for I could not trust my voice to speak, I left him.

Now there was no longer opportunity for me to skulk around.

I was forced to take my chances, knowing full well that the Storks, and most likely half a dozen soldiers, were searching the city for me.

As I figured it there was little to be gained, and much risk run, in dodging from one corner to another in the attempt to avoid passers-by

since he who saw me co-maneuvering might be certain I was bent on mischief, and thus I should find myself in difficulties when none would have existed had I gone in a straightforward fashion.

Hence it was, after leaving David I walked boldly through the streets as if I was one of the king's most loyal subjects'; but it may be set down for a fact, however, that I did not court companionship, and when I saw two or three approaching, crossed to the other side of the street, whenever it could be done secretly.

Many times I was forced to pass some citizen, or a soldier clad in a red coat, and then my heart literally stood still until I found it difficult to breathe; but no mishap befell me, and I gained the alley without having been recognized, however many may have been searching for me.

At that end of the passage nearest the water I saw standing in the shadow a dark form, and

approaching it boldly was arrested by Sergeant Champe's hand on my shoulder.

"You are come in good time, lad. Where is your comrade?"

"In the boat."

"Then we may as well take our stations," and the sergeant spoke quietly, as if he had been engaged in some simple duty; rather than that of attempting to steal from beneath the very eyes of Sir Henry Clinton the traitor who would have sold his country.

"Where is Master Baldwin?" I ventured to ask.

"Somewhere abroad in the city; never fear but that he will be here on time. Follow me, and from this moment do not so much as speak."

The sergeant led the way up the alley until we were come to that portion of the fence where the palings had been partially removed, and after taking one off we crawled through, he

replacing the board once we were on the other side.

As proof that he had made good use of his time, my companion went through the garden with the air of who knows exactly the point he wishes to gain, and forced his way into the midst of a clump of shrubs which grew midway from the house to the lower end of the inclosure.

Here he crouched upon the ground, motioning for me to do the same, and then there was nothing for us but to wait until the renegade should appear, as he had done every night since arriving in New York.

CHAPTER VIII.

FLIGHT.

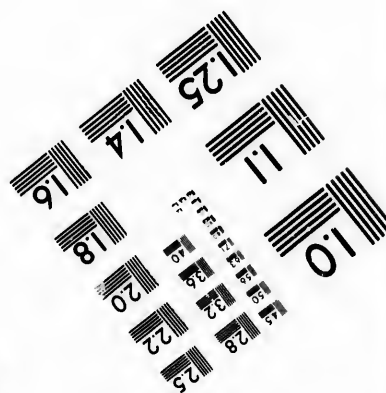
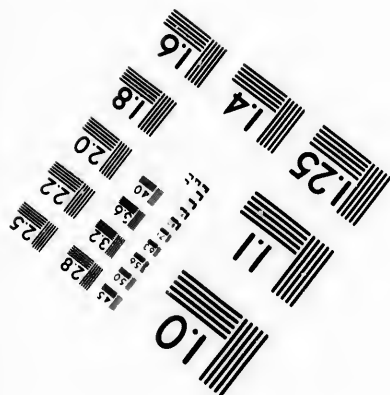
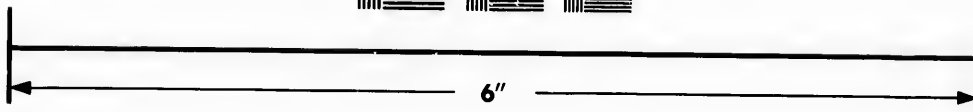
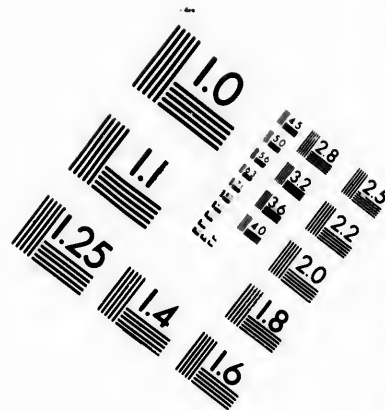
NEVER, either before nor since, have I spent two such long, fearsome hours as on that night of the 5th of November when we crouched amid the shrubbery straining our ears to catch the lightest sound as we awaited the coming of the arch traitor, and thinking of what would be our fate if he should succeed in alarming the guard while we were trying to make him prisoner.

Once when I would have whispered to Sergeant Champe, he pressed his hand over my mouth in token that I must remain silent, and as the moments wore on, bringing no change in the situation, it seemed as if I must cry aloud, so grievous was the tension upon my nerves.

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Finally we heard footsteps in the alley just outside the garden, and when, from the sound, we knew they had passed and re-passed several times that portion of the fence where the palings had been loosened, we understood that Master Baldwin had begun his portion of the task which, at that moment, seemed to me could lead nowhere else than the gallows.

From our hiding-place I could see indistinctly the windows in the rear of the house, and those I watched, believing we should see the reflection of a light when the traitor returned from hobnobbing with the Britishers, as it was said he did nightly, although it was common gossip in the city that there were many wearing the king's uniform who refused to sit at the same table with one who had sold his honor for gold and a commission.

I noted the fact that Sergeant Champe also looked from time to time at the windows, and I believed he too was watching for the light as

a token that the time for action was nigh at hand.

Now and then in the distance we heard the measured tread of men which told that the patrol was passing; but save for that a most distressing silence reigned, and I would have sacrificed much of safety could I have broken that fearsome stillness.

My legs became cramped with remaining in one position, but only when I could endure the pain no more did I venture to move ever so slightly, while as for the sergeant, I question if he so much as lifted a finger during two of the longest hours that can well be imagined.

Although the seconds passed so slowly, I was surprised almost into an exclamation, when by the cry of the watch we knew the hour of midnight was at hand.

It had been believed that by this time the work would be finished, and yet there was

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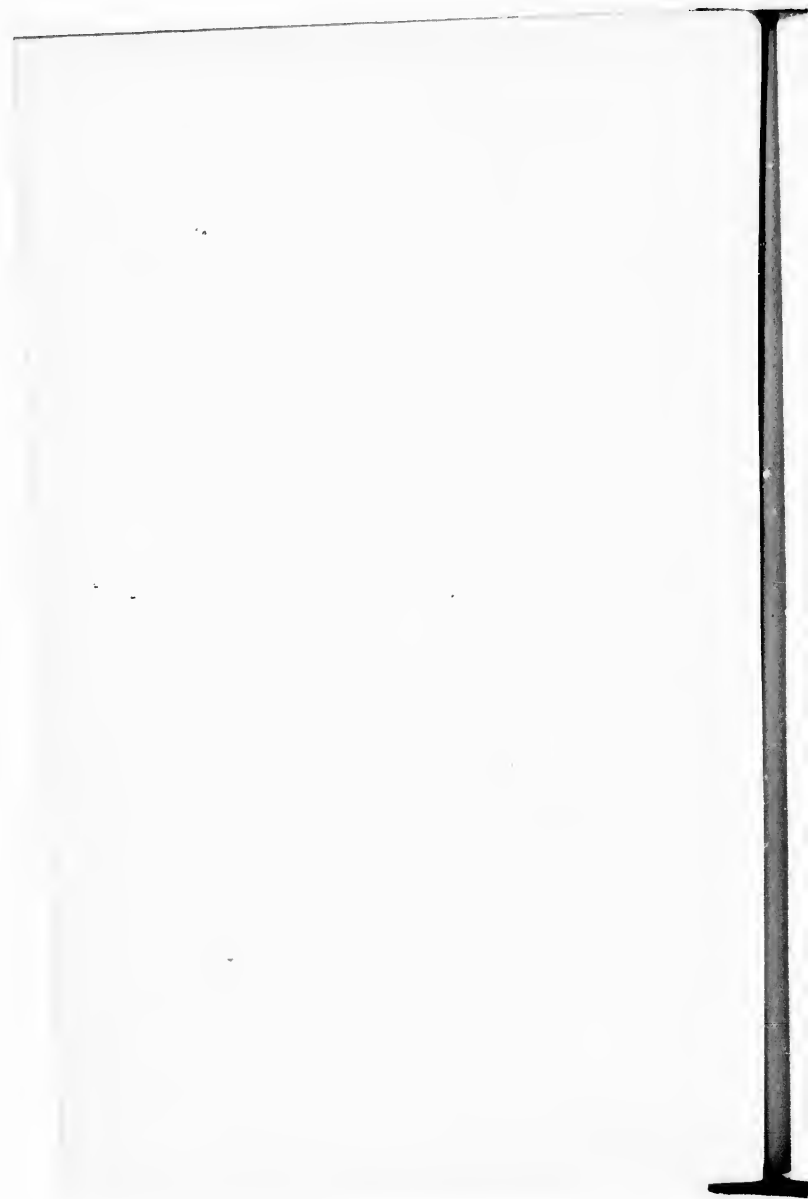
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FROM OUR HIDING-PLACE WE COULD SEE THROUGH THE
WINDOWS WHERE THE TRAITOR SLEPT.—Page 175.



nothing to betoken that the traitor had returned to his lodgings.

From the rustling of the dry leaves I believed my companion was trembling violently, and I stretched out my hand to touch him.

He was crying!

I never would have believed so determined and soldierly a man could give way to tears had I not felt them on my hand, and now I understand it was vexation and disappointment, rather than grief, which caused such a display of weakness.

When the first flush of surprise had passed away I began to realize that he believed some unlucky chance was to prevent the accomplishment of the design, and regardless of possible noise I moved four or five paces toward the house to make certain there were no signs of life to be seen from the windows.

All was gloom and silence as if I stood before an uninhabited dwelling.

Returning to the sergeant's side I motioned toward the building, and he shook his head sadly.

It was much as if he said he no longer even hoped we might be successful.

He yet remained motionless, save when now and then a stifled sob shook his body, and I mentally counted each sixty seconds that I might have some idea of the passage of time, but soon lost my reckoning when I got well into the thousands.

The watch had not yet called the hour of one when we heard the scuffling of feet on the alley just outside the garden fence, and Sergeant Champe understood that Master Baldwin was trying to attract his attention.

I made no effort toward leaving the hiding-place when my companion rose cautiously to his feet, believing I was to remain there while he spoke with Master Baldwin, but the pressure of his hand on my arm told that I was expected to follow.

At this hour of the night there was little danger of our attracting the attention of enemies, save from the building, and we went toward the fence at a reasonably rapid pace.

Master Baldwin was near the palings, his face turned toward Broad Way that he might not be taken by surprise from that direction, and Sergeant Champe presented himself boldly at the opening in the fence through which we had entered.

"It is useless to remain here longer to-night," he said in a whisper, and Master Baldwin replied :

"Something has prevented him from returning home, else he would have been here before this."

"We will hope for better fortune to-morrow night. The boys must not remain in the city, and it is for you to see that they have a safe hiding-place."

"I know of one which will serve their purpose, but it is on the opposite shore."

"See that they are taken to it, and manage to speak with me during the forenoon, even though you are forced to come to the barracks. We cannot afford to lose another opportunity, for the legion is to be sent away very soon."

Master Baldwin nodded; the sergeant clasped my hand warmly after he came through the fence, and then we separated, he going toward Broad Way, while Master Baldwin and I went where David was in waiting.

I could well fancy how nervous the lad was by this time, for the hours must have seemed as long to him as they had to me, and I urged my companion to his best pace in order that David's suspense might be the sooner ended.

We saw no person on the streets. It was as if we walked through a deserted city; but yet we dared not speak regarding that matter which was nearest our hearts lest an enemy be in hiding among the shadows.

David was on the alert, as I knew he would

be even though we had been away four-and-twenty hours instead of three, and I could guess much of what was in his mind when a dry sob choked his voice as he would have asked why we came alone.

"There is nothing to be done this night," Master Baldwin said, as he stepped into the boat and took the oars from the lad's hands, and until he had rowed a long distance from the shore neither of us three so much as whispered.

Then I explained to my comrade that the traitor had failed to come into the garden for the first time since his arrival in the city, and added in conclusion, to give him heart :

"He will surely be there to-morrow night, and so that our purpose is finally accomplished, we can well afford to give him a little more of our time."

"But what of ourselves? Close watch will doubtless have been set for us by that time."

"You shall go to an old hiding-place of mine, and remain till I come for you after dark to-morrow," Master Baldwin said. "I can answer for your safety there, and when you venture into the city again it will be so late in the night there is little chance of your being recognized, for the Storks cannot remain upon the streets constantly. We shall surely succeed in our work on the second attempt."

"I had prayed it might be finished this night," David said tremulously, and I understood how great had been the strain upon him as he sat in the boat all that while, starting at every sound, even as I had done in the garden.

From that moment we held no converse until after having gained the opposite shore and hauled the boat up amid the bushes.

"Now keep close at my heels, lads, and I'll lead you to a hut which might contain more to make men comfortable; but could not afford a safer hiding-place."

Perhaps we walked straight back from the river, as it seemed to me in the darkness, during nearly half an hour, and then the journey was come to an end.

We were arrived at a log hut in the thicket, built as stoutly as a fort, and into this Master Baldwin led the way.

As soon as might be a blaze was kindled in a fireplace formed of clay, and grateful indeed was the warmth, for the night was biting cold, although until now we had given such fact but little thought because of our anxiety of mind.

Two benches and a rough table made of hewn boards comprised all the furnishings; but we were not distressed because of this.

The knowledge that we were safe from those whom Jethro or Ben Stork might send in pursuit of us was more gratifying than the greatest luxuries could possibly have been.

From a cunningly-contrived cupboard behind the fireplace Master Baldwin drew forth some

dried beef and salt fish, and from such thirst inspiring food we made a hearty meal as we talked freely concerning the disappointments of the night.

In less than half an hour from the time we arrived all three of us were stretched at full length on the floor with our feet toward the fire, and I was hardly more than in this position before my eyes were closed in slumber, only to be opened next morning when Master Baldwin shook me by the shoulder.

"The moment has come when I must set forth for the city," he said, speaking hurriedly like one in great haste. "You two are to remain here without so much as venturing out of doors until I return, no matter how long I may be absent. The keg is filled with water; you know where is stored the supply of food, and it only remains to be patient, otherwise the hours will seem doubly long."

Then he was gone, and I said to myself that

if we were to stay there in hiding it would be wise to spend all the time we could in sleep, therefore I rolled over with the hope of finding a softer spot as I closed my eyes again.

Additional repose was denied me, however, for having once been aroused my mind went instantly to the work which remained to be done, and slumber fled very far from my eyelids.

"If you can sleep any more you have a stouter heart than I," David said grimly, as he arose to his feet and began pacing to and fro. "The wonder in my mind is how I could have lost consciousness when we lay down here."

Then we fell to talking of what had happened during the past four-and-twenty hours, he telling me of his fears as he sat in the boat awaiting our coming and expecting each instant to hear those sounds which would tell that we had been discovered and were pursued, and I

depicting my sensations as we crouched amid the shrubbery in the garden waiting for the coming of the traitor.

During this long day we ate whenever our stomachs craved the oversalt food; talked much of the past, and speculated long regarding the future when we should be members of the Continental Army, for of course we understood full well that we could not return to our homes again until after the redcoats had been driven out of New York.

It was not yet dark when we were startled by the sound of footsteps approaching the hut, and I seized a billet of firewood with which to defend myself, for I fully expected the enemy had tracked us to this place, but the poor weapon was suddenly dropped when, the door opening, Master Baldwin appeared.

One glance at his face and I understood that evil fortune had befallen us.

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I SEIZED A BILLET OF FIREWOOD WITH WHICH TO DEFEND
MYSELF.—Page 186.



purpose had been discovered, and he put under arrest, which caused me to cry :

"How could they have suspected him?"

"Suspected whom, my lad?" Master Baldwin asked in a tone of exceeding sadness.

"The sergeant. Is he in prison?"

"No; but there is no longer any hope we can make a prisoner of the traitor."

"What?" David and I cried in concert.

"The time for the legion of deserters to embark was nearer at hand than we supposed. It is possible something has occurred in the south to render it necessary that exceedingly honorable body of men be sent forward at once, or that Arnold fears they may desert again if he allows them to remain too long in the city."

"Are they to leave soon?" I cried, impatient because Master Baldwin was so long in telling what should have been a short story.

"Arnold did not return to his quarters last night because he slept on board the transport

which is to carry the legion southward, and he will not lodge there again for many months, if ever."

"But Sergeant Champe?" I cried yet more impatiently.

"I went to seek him this morning after learning what was being done. His orders were that I present myself at the barracks, if I failed to see him on the street, and there I went. The sergeant was among those sent aboard the transport shortly before sunrise this morning."

"Why, there is danger he may be obliged to sail with them!" I cried in horror, as I pictured to myself one who loved the cause forced to take his place in the ranks of the Britishers.

"*May* be obliged! Lads, he has already gone! The transport sailed at one o'clock this afternoon, and the Virginian must now serve the king, or acknowledge that which cannot fail of taking him directly to the gallows."

There was so much of evil fortune in Master

Baldwin's disconnected story that some moments elapsed before I could fully understand all which had come upon us, and then I saw the picture.

The traitor escaped from us, who could have trapped him so readily, by the merest chance, and the brave youth from Virginia, wearing the uniform he hated, receiving orders from that man above all others in these united colonies to be most despised!

It was indeed a sorry ending to the adventure, and for the moment I believed fate would have been more kindly to the gallant sergeant had it brought him speedy death.

Master Baldwin was not disposed to give us overmuch time in which to dwell upon the matter, however.

"You lads are, of all those connected with the plot, in the greatest danger, although I can understand full well how desperate is the sergeant's position. The boy you took prisoner

has returned to the city ; his story, added to and embellished until you would hardly recognize it, is in the mouths of all the gossips, and a reward of five pounds is offered for the capture of each. I doubt not but that this side of the river will speedily be searched, for the promise of ten pounds will make of many a man who has professed to love the cause, a loyal subject to his majesty, and you must be on your way toward our lines within an hour."

"Did you see Master Schuster?" I asked, failing for the moment to realize fully the danger which menaced us.

"Ay ; but he was too much alarmed to venture on speech with me. Never before have I seen a man so thoroughly frightened, and I dare wager he would deny ever having seen either of us three, if the question was put to him by one wearing a red coat."

"I suppose his cowardice is so great that he will not so much as think of going to my mother,"

David said bitterly, and his eyes grew moist as he understood that there was no longer the slightest chance he could see his best friend until after many months—perhaps years—had passed.

"The same thought was in my mind, and I went to your homes that there might be no more anxiety in that quarter than is absolutely necessary. Both the good women believe your escape is the same as accomplished, and I will answer for it their hearts are not so heavy as yours."

"The sadness in my heart is not wholly because I must flee," I replied quickly. "It grieves me that the plot has failed signally; but most of all because Sergeant Champe is in such sore straits."

"It is best to think of nothing save what lays before you," Master Baldwin said kindly, and then he began explaining how we had best proceed in order to gain Major Lee's camp.

I do not think he gave this advice because he thought it necessary, but rather to hearten us

by leading our thoughts to the future, and in this last he succeeded.

When the moment had come he conducted us to the water's edge, where was concealed his boat, and promising to visit the camp before a month passed, actually pushed us into the craft.

Hugging the Jersey shore closely, that we might have an opportunity of taking to our heels in case of pursuit, we rowed as when that villainous cur, Ben Stork, had been an unwilling prisoner aboard, watching closely meanwhile, as may well be imagined, for any sign which might give token that we were being pursued.

To my mind there was little cause for fear.

I could not believe that Jethro Stork or his precious brother Ben would have any suspicion we had passed nearly twenty hours on the New Jersey shore; but fancied they were at that very moment watching intently every craft which put out from New York, in the hope of intercepting us.

Because of this unfounded, and perhaps unreasonable, belief, I was not as cautious as should have been a lad whose life was in the greatest peril.

To me, at the time, it was as if we had escaped all danger, and that there remained for us no more than to row so far as the encampment of Major Lee's Legion, when we could snap our fingers at the Stork family.

David's mind was concerned with little else save our future, and as he pulled vigorously at the oar the dear lad talked regarding that time when we, wearing the Continental uniform, would do for our country something more than spy around New York to gather such poor information as might come our way.

Thus it was that instead of keeping sharpest watch, at the very hour when we should have been most keenly on the alert our minds wandered from what should have been the one important duty.

Perhaps five minutes had passed without my having searched with my eyes the river as well as was possible in the gloom of the fast-coming night, when suddenly the sound of oars brought me to a realization of what should ever have been present in my thoughts.

David heard it almost at the same instant, and whispered:

"Whoever may be in that on-coming craft must already have heard the sound of oars, for we have been exceedingly careless."

"Pull for the shore. We will take our chances on land rather than the water."

The skiff was headed for the Jersey side of the river as soon as might be thereafter, and, rowing cautiously now, since all the mischief had been done, we pulled at our best speed, which was far inferior to that of the other craft, while we knew beyond a peradventure that these newcomers were in pursuit.

It needed not the fragments of conversation

which we overheard just before reaching the shore, to tell us who was so close at hand.

"They can be none other than the traitorous rebels, and if we are so minded neither of them shall escape."

It was Ben Stork who said this, as I well knew from the tone of his voice, and his brother Jethro replied :

"Have no fear, lad, that they can give us the slip. Stand ready to shoot instantly you have a fair target, for it matters little whether we take them dead or alive—the reward of ten pounds holds good in either case."

Now I realized fully to what extremities our carelessness had led us, for it seemed more than likely they could so far gain in the chase as to be able to bring one or both of us down with a bullet, and for the moment my heart was as lead, heavy in my breast, for I believed that indeed was the end near at hand.

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTURED.

FROM the time I became convinced our capture was certain, until David and I leaped ashore, no more than forty seconds had elapsed.

The two Storks, thinking rather of the ten pounds which had been offered as reward for our capture than that they might be benefiting the king, or wreaking a private vengeance, were so near the landing when I sprang from the boat as to appear no more than fifty yards away, and it needed not the sight of Benjamin rising to his feet suddenly with a musket in his hands, to tell me that I could not too soon get under cover.

"Have a care to yourself, David," I said sharply, as we two ran with all speed toward

the thicket which bordered this side of the river. "Have a care to yourself, for the Tory cur is about to fire!"

The words had no sooner been spoken than the report of a musket rang out, and I heard the hissing of the bullet as it cut its way through the foliage nearer my head than was agreeable.

The night was so nearly come that the darkness sheltered us once we were within the thicket, and had it been possible for us to have run at full speed without making any noise whatsoever, then might we readily have given our pursuers the slip.

Unfortunately, however, as we floundered on in the darkness, making twice as much of a disturbance as if we had been thoroughly acquainted with the way, the enemy could follow us readily, and our only hope lay in outstripping the Tories in the flight.

There was no longer any reason to fear they

might attempt to shoot us down, because we were completely screened from view, and thus was the fear of a sudden death taken from us for the time being.

"Come to a standstill, or I'll fire!" Jethro cried, after having followed us perhaps a couple of hundred yards.

There was no reason why I should waste breath in replying to this demand, unless it might be to let him know I was not a fool who could be thus frightened; but he who is pursued plays a simple part when he spends his wind in vain, and I held my peace.

How long we two ran in silence, one at the other's heels, I cannot say of a surety; but it seemed to me it was hardly more than five minutes since we left the boat when David began to slacken pace somewhat, and I urged him forward in whispers:

"I cannot do it, Oliver," he replied, speaking with difficulty because of his labored breathing.

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"I am nearly blown already. Do you keep on, and let them make a prisoner of me. Thus your escape will be insured. My capture is certain."

"Do you believe I would leave a comrade behind in the enemy's hands?" I asked sharply, hurt because David had judged me so meanly.

"But if it is possible for you to escape, and I am out of the race, why give them two prisoners when one will suffice?"

"Because I do not choose to have it laid at my door that I deserted a friend. Run as far as you can, and then we will measure strength with them."

I spoke hopefully at this time to cheer my friend; but knew only too well that it was a foolish speech.

These two Storks were armed, and would perhaps be better pleased at carrying us back to New York dead than alive, therefore when

the instant came that David must halt we were the same as prisoners.

There was time, perhaps, for me to have counted twenty before the dear lad, almost at the verge of exhaustion, tripped over a half-decayed log and fell heavily, remaining motionless as if death had come to spare him further suffering.

It was only by catching at the nearest tree that I prevented myself from falling headlong across his body, and then as soon as possible I leaned over him, fearing the poor lad had received dangerous injury.

"How is it with you?" I asked anxiously, and he replied as well as he might because of his thick, rapid breathing:

"I am at the end of my rope. Leave me—save yourself."

Here in the thicket it was so dark one could not see an object at the distance of half a dozen paces away, and I crept around blindly for

something which would serve as a weapon, but not finding so much as a stout stick.

From the rear, that is to say in that direction where ran the river, could be heard the two Storks as they floundered on through the underbrush, and instantly there came into my mind the hope that now we were still they might perchance pass us in the gloom, and thus we have an opportunity of doubling back on them.

There was no such good fortune in store for us as that these traitorous curs should miss their prey, and the two were not more than half a dozen yards from me when I heard Jethro say as he came to a standstill :

"Look out for yourself, Benjamin. The rebels have halted hereabout, and we must not miss them in the darkness. Be ready to shoot, and take care of your aim, for there is no reason why we should run any risks."

I believe my conscience never would have

troubled me in the future if, it being possible, I had killed that Tory where he stood.

He was speaking of David and I much as he might a couple of foxes who, being run down, had best be shot dead than that the hunter take the chances of receiving a scratch.

I literally held my breath, hoping even now they might pass us by, and having decided in my own mind that it would be worse than folly, unarmed as we were, to attempt any resistance when they demanded our surrender.

There was no need to warn David of what I hoped to do, for he still remained where he had fallen, his face pressed among the decaying leaves until the noise of his heavy breathing was stifled.

The Tories came, of course by chance, directly toward us, and had my comrade been on his feet I believe of a verity we might have stepped aside and so let them pass.

As it was, however, such a plan could not

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have been carried into effect save at the expense
of too much noise, and I was forced to stand
still until Jethro Stork had advanced within
three or four paces, the muzzle of his musket
hardly more than that many inches distant from
my chest.

Then suddenly he saw me, and cried in a
loud voice:

"Surrender, you rebel, or I'll shoot you as I
would a cur!"

"When an unarmed man is directly in front
of a loaded weapon without means of defense,
it would seem as if there was no need
of demanding his surrender," I replied with
a laugh which had in it very little of
mirth.

"Do you yield?" he cried.

"I see no other course. If there was half a
show of succeeding in case of making a resist-
ance, you may be sure I would not be thus
humble."

"Have done with so much talk! Where is the other rebel?"

"Find him if you count on gaining the reward; but do not think I am to search at your bidding."

By this time Ben had stumbled across David's body and come nigh to falling, whereupon he clubbed his musket viciously. For a moment I felt certain it was his purpose to brain my comrade, as indeed he might have done without fearing to be punished therefor, because we were the same as outlaws.

"His death will be on your head if you strike, Ben Stork!" I cried. "There has been no resistance made by either of us, and should you take our lives it will be none other than a cold-blooded murder!"

"You choose rather to go back and be hanged, do you?" the villainous cur asked, with a laugh that strongly tempted me to try conclusions with him, even though the odds were so

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absolutely against me. "I have no desire to do the king's butchering, but a few days later can sit at my leisure and see the executioner stretch his neck."

Then Ben lowered his musket and kicked David viciously, ordering him to stand up.

While my comrade obeyed, Jethro Stork, lowering his weapon, stepped forward, commanding me to hold up my hands, after which he proceeded to search my garments as if believing I had weapons concealed.

Having satisfied himself on this score he took from his pocket a piece of stout hempen cord, and with it tied my wrists together, drawing the bonds so tightly as to cause me no slight amount of pain.

While this was being done Ben followed his brother's example in the treatment of David, and the two of us were soon tied together in such a fashion that we could not have made much progress toward escape even had our

Tory captors given us free permission to run.

At the moment we were thus helpless all hope deserted me, and I could see in my mind's eye, at not such a very long distance in the future, the outlines of the gallows on which David and I would be hanged, or a squad of soldiers who were to put us to death in a more humane fashion.

That there were many days of life yet remaining to us I did not believe.

The Storks would, so I argued, deliver us up to the Britishers in New York before midnight. We should be tried within forty-eight hours, most likely, for aiding and abetting the so-called rebels, and both of us well knew the penalty.

All this was in my mind on the supposition that we would be taken directly to the city, in order that the Tories might handle the promised reward as soon as possible.

Therefore it was that I felt a certain amount of surprise, which came near to verging into hope, when Ben said :

"I have no stomach for pulling across the river to-night with these rebels. They must have friends on the shore below here, where they remained hidden yesterday ; and who shall say that our movements were not observed when we landed for the chase?

"These two have not so many friends here about that we can be bested, armed as we are," Jethro said, with a certain display of carelessness, yet I knew that in his cowardly heart he was giving no slight weight to his brother's suggestion.

"We might not be bested," Ben hastened to add ; "but there is a chance our prisoners could be taken from us, and it would make me sore to lose the ten pounds which are now so near our pockets."

"By all of which you mean—to do what?"

"Stay where we are until daybreak. After the sun has risen I venture to say there are no rebels hereabout who would dare make an attack upon us once we were in our boat."

Jethro threw himself upon the ground as if to consider the matter more at his leisure, and David pressed my hands, which were nigh to his because of the cord, much as if he would say that there was yet good reason for hope.

How it might be that we, fettered and unarmed, should get the best of these two Tories I had not so much as the ghost of an idea, but it was in my mind that if they delayed returning to New York it was not impossible we could free ourselves.

Jethro, who ordinarily would not have stopped to argue with his younger brother, now invited Ben to state in more detail why he considered it imprudent to venture on the river after nightfall, and thus the two showed their cowardice.

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For my part I did not believe there were
any friends of ours who could aid us at this
time in case the Tories went directly back to
the city.

I fancied it would be safer for them to do
so, if indeed there was anything like danger
attached to their side of the enterprise, in the
night rather than the day, and as the matter
turned, it was proven to me of how little value
my own judgment might be.

When Ben had come to an end of explaining
that we must have friends nearabout, because
of the fact that we had remained hidden cer-
tainly during the day just passed, Jethro pro-
fessed to be satisfied with the reasoning and
consented, as if in thus acting he was confer-
ring a favor upon his brother, to remain in the
thicket until sunrise.

Even this precaution was not all the coward
Ben desired.

He feared some one might have followed on

his trail, after having seen us land, and was even now coming through the thicket.

In order to throw a possible pursuer off the scent, he suggested that we be taken a quarter of a mile or more further up-stream, where perchance a better camping-place might be found.

To this Jethro also agreed, and we were ordered to march forward as best we might while standing face to face, our four wrists pinioned together, while the valiant Tories, their weapons ready for instant use, followed close in our wake.

As may be supposed, we could not walk rapidly, David and I, and after ten minutes of awkward movement, during which time I believed we had not gained two hundred yards in distance, Ben called a halt, saying to his brother that the spot where we then were afforded a fairly comfortable place for a camp.

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from the wind, and amid a thicket of spruce
trees which would provide material for a bed,
were one at liberty to make use of it.

David and I were ordered to sit down, one
either side a small sapling, to which our fettered
hands were tied securely.

The only comfort to be found in the situation
for us was that we might hold converse together
in whispers, and could stretch our legs now and
then, although there was good reason to believe
our arms would be cramped before the morning
sun gave these cowards sufficient heart to ven-
ture on the journey across the river.

I have said that hope came to me when the
curs who had so nearly earned the ten pounds
reward proposed to remain on that side all
night; but after thus learning how they in-
tended to guard against our escape I gave way
once more to despair.

The two Storks threw themselves down
on the ground half a dozen feet in front of

us, and Ben took from his coat pocket a supply of food, which showed that they had set out in pursuit of us believing the chase would be a long one.

Now they could regale themselves at their leisure, and I venture to say both had all the more pleasure in this meal because of the belief that they were tantalizing us by eating when it might well be supposed we were hungry.

David pressed his hands against mine now and then as if to hearten me, and I clasped his fingers as best I might to let him think I had not yielded to despair, although the shadow of the scaffold was hanging heavily upon me.

We made no attempt to speak one with the other, lest the Tories should check us, and I was not minded to give them even that pitiful satisfaction.

After perhaps no more than half an hour, although it seemed to me fully a third of the right must have been spent, Ben Stork gave

himself up to slumber while his brother acted the part of sentinel.

Then, in time, lulled by the silence, which was profound save for the sighing of the gentle wind through the trees, Jethro's heavy breathing told that he had also had so far forgotten his duty as to yield to the influences of the night.

"Is there no way we may best them even now?" David whispered cautiously, bending forward that he might speak directly in my ear, and I replied, striving to prevent the sorrow in my heart from being apparent in the words:

"I know not what we can do, fettered as we are. A dozen times have I tried to work my fingers so far as to undo the knots of this cord; but all in vain. Unless you have greater freedom we must remain prisoners until it shall please these curs to give up to the Britishers."

"The rope is drawn so tightly that my fingers are numb, and even if——"

He ceased speaking very suddenly, for at that instant we both heard what sounded like the breaking of dry twigs under a heavy weight, and I believed there were wild beasts prowling around, even though it did not seem probable any such had their lairs near by.

We listened intently while one might have counted ten, the blood bounding in our veins until it seemed as if the pulsations of our hearts must waken the Tories, and then there was no question but that a man or an animal was stealthily approaching.

David showed himself to be quicker-witted than I, for he instantly suspected the truth of the situation, and leaning forward whispered eagerly in my ear :

"It is Master Baldwin ! He saw the pursuit on the water, and has followed that he may do us a good turn."

"It could not have been that he watched our boat so long," I replied, refusing to believe such

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Yet even as I denied the correctness of my comrade's statement all fear of wild beasts was gone from me, and I listened intently to trace in the sounds of what was now a regular approach something which should betoken that they were caused by a human being.

"It must be him," David repeated, as if to stimulate his own courage. "It must be him, and we are saved!"

Even though my comrade was in the right, we were not safe unless perchance Master Baldwin was armed; but the fact that he might be near gave me such cheer as I never expect to experience again.

Then came an instant when I was startled, although almost expecting it, by the pressure of a hand on my shoulder, and turning as nearly as I might while held in position by the rope, I

saw a dark mass against the foliage which told me a friend was near at hand.

"It is I—Baldwin," came a whisper as gentle as the breathing of the night wind. "Where are the Tories?"

"Directly in front of us, asleep," David replied cautiously.

"How are they armed?"

"Both have muskets, and had as soon kill us as to take us into the city alive, the reward being the same."

"How are you fettered?"

I explained in a few words, when he, first passing his hand over the rope to make certain of its position, drew across the strands the keen edge of a knife, and we were free so far as concerned our limbs.

ESCAPE.

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CHAPTER X.

TURNING THE TABLES.

WITHOUT being told, I knew that Master Baldwin was unarmed save for the knife with which he had severed our bonds, otherwise, so I judged, he would have approached with more boldness, for from what he had already shown of himself I knew he was by no means a timorous man.

After cutting the rope he stepped back into the thicket as if of the mind that we should follow him, and I understood that it was his purpose we slip away from our captors rather than make any attempt at disarming them.

Neither David nor I were minded to go away thus, leaving those scoundrelly Tories be-

hind to follow on our trail so soon as they were awakened, and by our hesitation it was much as though each gave words to the same thought.

Now that we were free to move as we pleased it did not seem either a dangerous or a difficult task to creep upon our late captors, and should this be done successfully the work of disarming them would be comparatively light.

On the contrary, if they awakened while we were making the attempt, I argued with myself that we were but little worse off, since coming from out the heavy slumber suddenly they would be confused, and we might take leave of them at our will.

It was not with the idea of risking this last chance that I halted to learn what scheme David might propose.

There was no question in my mind as to the possibility of doing as I desired, and it seemed

as if my comrade was of much the same opinion.

Because we hesitated to follow him Master Baldwin advanced once more until he could lay his hand upon my shoulder, and as he thus eluted me it was much the same as though he had asked why we delayed.

I pointed toward the sleepers, trusting he would understand the gesture by the sense of hearing, since the night was now come so dark that his eyes were of but little avail, and I was not mistaken.

He increased the pressure upon my shoulder, thus giving me to understand he disapproved of the plan; but there was in my mind the thought that it were better to take a few chances here while the Tories were asleep than run the danger of being pursued before we had well gotten away, for however timorous these two Storks might be, that reward of ten pounds would go far toward screwing up their courage.

There was no need David Rhineland and I

should exchange a single word so far as understanding each other was concerned.

He knew exactly what I proposed to do, for there could be but one reason for thus turning back when we might have made good our escape, and he stood close by my side, awaiting the signal.

I gave it by pressing his hand, and together we stole forward, without heed to what Master Baldwin might do.

If either Jethro or Ben Stork had been versed in woodcraft we could not have crept up on them as we did, for he who has spent much time in the forest learns to sleep lightly, and instinctively wakens at the slightest unusual noise.

As we advanced more than once did a twig break under our feet, for we were, as you might say, moving at random since it was impossible to see anything before us, and yet the heavy breathing of the Tories continued undisturbed.

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Once we were come near to where I believed they were, it was necessary to stoop and grope around with our hands, lest we should actually step upon them, and while thus engaged I came upon the butt of a musket.

The weapon was most likely lying by the side of its owner; yet I took the chances of withdrawing it without changing my position, determined to treat them, should they awaken, even as they would have treated us, providing I first succeeded in getting control of the musket.

It was like playing at a game of jack-straws in the darkness, and although the odds were desperately against the attempt, it went through so admirably that the current of the sleeper's breathing was not changed.

Then I would have handed the weapon to David, and tried the same method with the second Tory, but that I soon understood the dear lad was following my example.

To shorten an over-long story, I had best

content myself by saying that in less than five minutes from the time Master Baldwin severed our bonds we were standing over the Stork brothers, prepared for anything they might attempt to do.

The tables had been turned most beautifully, and instead of our being carried back to New York that the villainous Tories might finger ten pounds of the king's gold, we would give them a most urgent invitation to accompany us to the encampment of Lee's Legion.

However, there was possible danger to be apprehended before our task was fully completed, for when we had aroused them in the darkness it was not unlikely one or the other might strike a cowardly blow with a knife, and our joy be turned to mourning.

"Step over your man so you may clutch him by the throat, and do not be afraid of putting too heavy a pressure upon it," I whispered softly to David, and in another instant those

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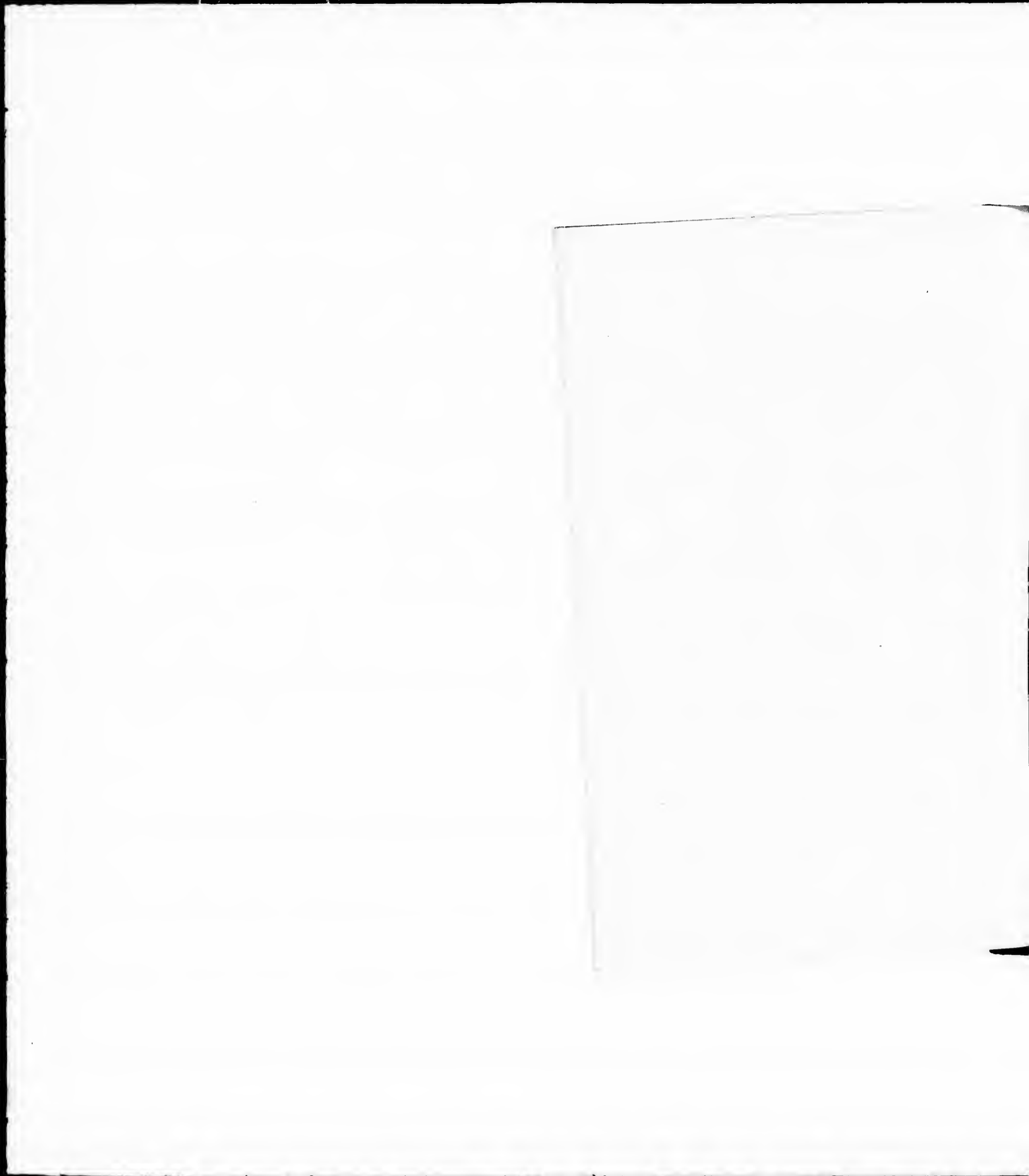
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"STEP OVER YOUR MAN, SO YOU MAY CLUTCH HIM BY THE
THROAT," I WHISPERED TO DAVID.—Page 222.



who had triumphed a few hours previous were suddenly awakened to find themselves gasping for breath.

"At the first show of resistance I shall act as you threatened us!" I cried in Jethro's ear, for he it was over whom I kneeled. "We have taken possession of the muskets, and propose to go in another direction than New York."

As I spoke the sound of rapid footsteps from the rear told that Master Baldwin, apprised of our success, was coming forward to lend whatever aid might be in his power, and David cried :

"Have we nothing with which to truss them up so that it may not be necessary to keep so strong a hold upon the curs?"

"You are choking me to death," Ben gasped, speaking only after the greatest difficulty, and David replied, with a note of satisfaction in his tones :

"It would give me solid pleasure to do so,

but that I might afterward be ashamed of having killed such a wretch."

"Here is what will serve to tie them," Master Baldwin said, as he crept around in the darkness to learn how we were situated, and I cried warningly :

"Be careful lest they strike with a knife, although should such an attempt be made it would be their last on this earth, for I am not minded to treat these villains with any approach at kindness after our late experience with them."

So thoroughly frightened was the cowardly Jethro that he made no effort even to speak, and dexterously did Master Baldwin tie his hands, using, as I afterward learned, the fragments of cord which had been severed from our wrists.

I have taken longer in the telling than was really required to render these Tories helpless, and when it had been done David and I rose to our feet with a sense of deepest relief.

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Now we were free, indeed, and what was more, would carry to Major Lee two prisoners who might possibly be made to serve as barter for some of our unfortunate friends who were confined in the prison ships.

"Will you go back to the hut?" Master Baldwin asked, and I replied promptly, having decided in my own mind what we should do unless it so chanced my comrade was opposed to the plan :

"We'll push on to the river. I am not afraid to venture forth in the night, and would be at at the American camp as soon as may be possible."

David was of the same opinion, and gave token of it by ordering Ben to rise.

"Are you going to carry me, who have never done you any wrong, to that wretched place again?" young Stork asked in a quavering voice, and David replied with a laugh :

"Your memory is treacherous when you

“speak of never having done us a wrong, for not more than an hour ago you proposed to shoot us down in cold blood. The best we could have hoped from you was to have been conducted to the scaffold. I shall not hold out any such promises as that, but this I vouch for right heartily: There won't be a second turning of the tables this night, and you may not find escape as easy when you make a second attempt.”

Now that his brother had spoken Jethro found his tongue, and he cried pleadingly—I believe the cowardly cur would have gotten on his knees before me had he dared to make the slightest movement.

“The threats we made were more in jest than earnest, and surely you will not take us prisoners to the American camp?”

“The threats were so much a jest that already in your mind had you fingered the ten pounds reward,” I said, angered that he should prove

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so arrant a coward, and then the fellow begged
and whimpered like a child, until I could have
struck him, prisoner though he was.

"There is no reason why we should delay for
such converse as this," Master Baldwin said im-
patiently. "These two were searching for you,
and unquestionably there are others of the same
kidney who would earn the reward by carrying
you to the gallows. Nothing is gained by loi-
tering, and much may be lost thereby. I can
lead the way to the river even though it be
dark, and the sooner you have set out on your
journey the better."

I was of the same mind; and, after threaten-
ing Jethro with a blow if he did not cease his
whining, I was ready to follow the guide.

Master Baldwin went as straight through the
thicket as if it had been broad day, bringing us
out within fifty yards of where the two boats
had been beached.

Once clear of the foliage, the night was not

so dark but that we could make our way up the river without difficulty ; and David took it upon himself to embark the prisoners, while I held a short conversation with the gentleman who had proven himself such a devoted friend, beginning it by asking how he chanced to come upon us so opportunely.

"You had hardly gotten out of earshot when I saw those Tories coming up the river," he said. "It did not require much thought to decide that they were in search of you, and it was then too late to give a warning. I could only hope to be of assistance by following at a distance. But for the fact that I was unarmed, you two would not have been prisoners even for a moment. As it was, however, I only hoped to render aid later, as really happened. It must be your care, since you have decided to carry them to the American camp, that they do not escape, for I doubt not that I have been recognized; and once they were to return to

make our way up the river, and David took it upon himself to guard the prisoners, while I held a watch over the gentleman who had been my friend, beginning to come upon us from the bank out of earshot when I saw him going up the river," he said. "I had thought much to go in search of you, and to give you a warning. I could not do so by following at a distance, for that I was unarmed, and I had been prisoners even before I was, however, I only escaped, as really happened. Now that you have decided to go to the camp, that they do not know that I have been there, they were to return to

New York, I could no longer be of service to the cause."

"I will answer for their safe-keeping, even though I stand guard over them myself. Shall you go into the city soon again?"

"You ask hoping to send your mother some word?"

"That is my desire, if it can be done without danger to yourself, sir."

"It shall be done, lad. I will see her to-morrow."

"And tell her by that time we shall have enlisted in Lee's Legion. If David's uncle recovers from his alarm there should be an opportunity for her to send us a message through him in due course of events."

"I will explain everything you would say, my boy. Have no fear as to that, and now get you gone, for it is better you were not on the river after daylight."

David had placed his prisoners in the stern-

sheets of the boat, and was standing ready to push her off.

There was nothing to delay our departure.

After a hearty hand-clasp with this true friend to the cause, we embarked, and until he was lost to view in the darkness I saw Master Baldwin standing on the shore watching to make certain no further mishap befell us.

Once we were well on our way up the river Jethro Stork began to plead for liberty; but David put an end to his whining by threatening him with a gag unless his mouth was speedily closed, and during the next hour I question if he so much as opened his lips to breathe.

"It was not so much of a misadventure after all, this being overhauled by our Tory friends," my comrade said when we had been rowing steadily for an hour or more, and I, thinking what might befall Master Baldwin in case these two Tories should be exchanged for American

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prisoners, or otherwise find their way into New York again, said doubtfully:

"That remains to be seen, David. We will not call the day fair until the sun be set, and while these cowards are alive there is always a possibility of treachery."

CHAPTER XI.

PURSUED.

THERE was in my mind the possibility of treachery on the part of the Storks, as I had said to David; but never for a moment did I think that they might have friends thereabout who would prevent us from gaining the encampment of Lee's Legion within the limit of time which we had set for ourselves.

After the prisoners had been bound by Master Baldwin, in such fashion as would preclude all possibility of their loosing themselves unaided, I believed them to be secured beyond chance of gaining freedom, and thus held in my mind that we had no more to fear.

We two, meaning David and myself, had come thus far safely out of more danger than

XI.

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and the possibility of the Storks, as I had for a moment did I see friends thereabout from gaining the entrance within the limit of our ourselves.

I had been bound by Mason as would preclude choosing themselves unto be secured beyond me, and thus held in my care to fear.

David and myself, had of more danger than

lads of our age often encounter, and were by this time so far up the river that one could well be excused for saying that we had finally come to an end of the adventure, as I then firmly believed was the case.

Therefore my mind went back among the exciting incidents in which we had taken prominent part, as if they were so far in the past as to be out of our lives, so to speak, and I found no slight amusement and satisfaction in picturing to myself the timorousness of Jacob Schuster while the hue and cry against us was kept up, and, afterward, the sorrow which would be his because the hundred guineas, the five hundred acres of land, and the three negroes, in fact, all the promised reward, had slipped through his fingers at the very moment he had good reasons for believing it was within his grasp.

"He is afraid for his life now, but will grieve desperately when the danger is past," I said to

David, laughing heartily at the picture my fancy had conjured up, and he must have been thinking of the same subject, for without asking to whom I referred he answered readily :

"There is the only gleam of light in the whole disappointing business. Uncle Jacob deserves to lose the reward, and he cannot be too thoroughly frightened to please me. That he should set himself up as a friend to the Cause is ridiculous ; if there was more to be gained in the way of money I doubt not but that he would shout loudly for the king, and care not a whit which side was victorious."

"Of a verity he is being punished now," I added with what may have seemed like malicious pleasure, "and his mind can never be wholly at rest until after we have been captured and executed, or the king's forces driven out of the colonies forever."

"It is the first that will be brought about, and before many days have passed," Ben Stork

the picture my fancy must have been thinking of without asking to be shown readily: a gleam of light in the darkness. Uncle Jacob would not, and he cannot be expected to please me. That I was up as a friend to the king, there was more to be said than money I doubt not but would be paid for the king, and the king was victorious." "I have seemed like malice being punished now," I said, "but my mind can never be changed after we have been captured by the king's forces driven over." "It will be brought about, and have passed," Ben Stork

cried in a rage, his anger all the greater because he had been forced to hold it in check so long. "There is no possibility that whippersnappers like you can defy successfully his majesty's army!"

"We seem to have done so thus far, and with but little difficulty," David replied laughingly. "Although both you lads told of our having proven ourselves rebels of the deepest dye, and goodly rewards were offered for our capture, we are yet so far free as to render matters very disagreeable for you. Unless I'm greatly mistaken, we shall be in a position to make certain you are not allowed speech with your Tory friends for many weeks to come."

"Don't be so certain about that, for——"

It was Ben who thus spoke, and Jethro prevented him from finishing what I doubted not was about to be a threat, and yet such a simple was I, wrapped up in my own conceit beyond the power of seeing an inch before my nose,

that never for an instant did I realize our danger until we were well amid it.

"There is good reason why you should prevent your precious brother from being too free with his tongue," David said warningly, being quite as blind to the possibilities as was I. "Too many rash words from either of you will bring into use gags, which, as Ben already knows, are unpleasant to wear. We are not minded to give such as you more privileges than might have been ours had the tables not been turned."

"We did not gag you, although in my place another might have done so in order to give you a taste of your own medicine," Ben said in what he most likely believed to be a friendly tone.

"We were then in the thicket, surrounded by your friends, or, at least, you believed we were, and there was no reason for taking stringent measures," I replied, defending our course, as it were, when I should have believed it beneath

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me to bandy words with such Tories as the Storks.

"Yet it was shown that if we had gagged you we might be pulling toward New York, instead of being carried to the rebel camp," Jethro said, speaking so loud that it was as if he believed me deaf, and yet I had no suspicion as to the reason of his so doing.

Neither David nor I made any reply to this speech; perhaps we both had grown tired of holding converse with the Storks.

Then Jethro began to plead loudly for us to release him from the bonds, because, as he said, the cord was cutting through the flesh to the very bone.

"You will speak in a lower tone, or be deprived of all opportunity to wag your tongue!" I cried sharply, angry at hearing the villain's whining. During such time as the conversation here set down had been carried on, I was plying the oars steadily but not vigorously.

To my mind there was no good reason why we should distress ourselves by over-much exertion. We yet had full two hours of darkness before us, and in that time it should be possible for us to gain the American encampment, however leisurely we worked.

Twice since leaving Master Baldwin had David spelled me at the task, I taking his place meanwhile in the stern-sheets where I could at the same time steer and keep a watch upon our prisoners, and, therefore, we were both in good bodily condition.

The Storks had made no attempt at freeing themselves from the cords which prevented any movement of the arms, and, in fact, it would have been useless to have done so, for Master Baldwin was evidently an expert in the art of tying knots.

Because they remained there apparently without the lightest hope of being able to effect an escape, I foolishly believed there was no

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thought of trying to outwit us, and, strange as
it may seem, failed to keep my eyes and ears
open for that which would tell us of pursuit.

I trusted to the darkness for concealment,
believing we had left the Jersey shore secretly,
and such folly was fully shared by my comrade.

Jethro spoke loudly from time to time; now
pleading that he and his brother be set free,
and again imploring us not to deliver them up
to Major Lee, using language, as I afterwards
realized, such as would give to any who might
chance to be in the vicinity a clear idea of the
situation.

Again and again did David or I threaten him
with a gag; but he continued his threats or
entreaties from time to time, we hesitating to
put him to so much of torture as must follow the
choking off of his speech, until suddenly the
truth dawned upon me.

My dull ears had caught the sound of oars,
seemingly close at hand, but muffled as if he

who used them was trying to creep up secretly, and in a twinkling all the truth came to me.

Jethro had learned—how, I never knew—that his friends were near at hand, and had been speaking thus loudly that they might be guided in the pursuit.

David and I brought all the trouble about by sheer carelessness, and had no one but ourselves to blame if those precious Storks succeeded in turning the tables for the second time.

I was not minded, however, that this should be done without a valiant struggle on my part, and on the instant my eyes were thus opened I leaped upon the scoundrel, giving no heed to the fact that I might upset the boat in my eagerness.

At the moment there was no thought in my mind save to repair, so far as might be, the mischief which had been wrought by my own heedlessness.

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As I sprang upon him he gave vent to a shrill scream; but an instant later my hands were upon his throat, preventing another outcry, and David, losing all idea of caution, asked in a loud tone:

"What has come upon you, Oliver? There is no reason why you should handle him so harshly, for——"

"Hold your tongue, and take up the oars!" I cried, speaking in a loud tone, as was necessary, otherwise our conversation might have been prolonged until Jethro's friends were within striking distance. "There is a boat close at hand, and we are like to pay dearly for our carelessness!"

I question if my comrade would have understood the situation in time to be of service, so certain had he been of our safety, if at that instant the report of a musket had not rung out on the still air, and the whistling of a bullet sounded within a few inches of his head.

Then was he, like myself, aroused from his dream of security, and in an instant we were battling once more for freedom, knowing full well that capture meant for us death.

I had shut Jethro's mouth, by making it impossible for him to breathe, and it can well be understood that under the circumstances there was little care in my mind as to what might be the result of my clutch upon his throat; but Ben, the Tory cur, set up such yells as told those in pursuit the exact location of our boat.

"Kill the villain!" David said in a whisper, as he bent himself to the oars. "It is his life or ours just now, and the shedding of Tory blood cannot be called murder at such a time as this!"

Ben Stork heard the words, as a matter of course, and when I, bending over Jethro in order to deal the cur a blow in the face, raised my hand, he believed I was about to act upon my comrade's suggestion.

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"Do not murder me! I beg of you to spare me!" he shrieked, and this prayer answered as well for information to our unseen enemy as had his yells.

Releasing my hold of Jethro's throat for the instant, I covered his mouth with my hand, using such force that it was equal to a blow, saying at the same time in a tone which must have told the Tories that I was in earnest:

"If either of you so much as whisper again I'll kill both without a second's hesitation!"

They were silent on the instant, and then, understanding that I must be ready to carry the threat into execution in order to have it effective, I lifted the boat-hook which David pushed toward me, holding the iron-shod end poised in the air just above their heads.

It was only reasonable they should believe I would do exactly as had been promised, for it was our lives against theirs, and on the instant both were silent.

David was pulling with an energy born of the knowledge that our lives were hanging in the balance; but I could hear the swish of oars in the distance, telling that our pursuers, whoever they might be, were no longer making any effort at keeping secret their approach.

I knew full well by the sounds, for it was yet so dark that we could not see twenty yards in either direction, that there was more than one pair of oars being used in the pursuing boat, and it would have been folly to suppose David alone could outstrip them in the race.

It was necessary I should aid him in the race wherein the stakes were the lives of two lads against ten pounds of the king's money, and yet this could not be done until our prisoners were rendered powerless to make the slightest noise.

Just for a moment there was in my mind the thought that by throwing both overboard we would not only put it out of their power to give

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token of our whereabouts, but at the same time
retard pursuit, for those in the oncoming craft
must necessarily stop to pick them up.

I repeat that this thought was in my mind just
for a moment, and then I resolutely put it far
from me, saying mentally that if we could not
save our own lives except by murder, then was
it better we submitted to such punishment as
his majesty's officers dealt out to spies and so-
called traitors.

To purchase our lives by the murder of such
as the Storks would be paying far too great a
price; because in after life one would ever see
before him the deed, and at that instant I said to
myself we would carry the miserable Tories into
Major Lee's camp alive, or go to our death as
lads should who had served the Cause to the
best of their ability.

Already was David breathing heavily, and I
knew he had winded himself by too great exer-
tion at the beginning of the race.

It was necessary I take his place at the oars, and without delay, else were we overhauled in a few moments.

Another musket shot came singing over the boat, this time so near to Jethro Stork that he turned his head quickly and would have cried out in alarm, coward as he was, but for a glimpse of the boathook which I held ready for a blow. There was nothing near at hand which might be used as a gag, and time was so precious that I could not spend many seconds hunting for material.

Whipping off my coat I tore from it both sleeves, and thrust one into each prisoner's mouth, forcing him to submit by squeezing his throat until breathing became painful.

Then, tearing the remainder of the garment into strips such as would serve in the stead of ropes, I bound the gag into place, giving little heed to the comfort of those whom I thus deprived of the power of speech.

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No more than two minutes had been spent in this work, and I was on the point of taking David's place at the oars when I realized that the prisoners might yet be able to give the pursuers an idea of the location of our boat, by kicking against the planking.

There was yet sufficient of my coat remaining to furnish a substitute for rope with which to tie their legs, and in considerably less time than it requires to set down the words, I had put it beyond the power of the Storks to signal the enemy.

It was well I had finished the work at this moment, for when I pushed David aside in order to take his place at the oars, the lad was breathing so heavily as to make it appear that he was completely spent by the severe exertion.

The slight noise occasioned by our changing places must have been heard by those who would aid the Tories, for immediately another musket shot rang out; but this time we did not

hear the singing of the bullet, and thus knew that our enemies were unable to locate us accurately.

We had lost ground somewhat by thus changing oarsmen, and it was with difficulty I could refrain from glancing over my shoulder after having settled down to the stroke, for it seemed as if Jethro's friends must be close aboard.

I tried in vain to decide how many more minutes we would be favored by the darkness. In the excitement I had lost all idea of time, and it seemed as if a new day must be near at hand, when the race would come to a speedy end, because those who pursued could readily shoot us down.

For the moment I did not dare look toward the east, fearing lest there I should see the first light of dawn, and then, realizing that he who would make a brave fight must face all the possibilities, I resolutely gazed around me to reckon up the chances.

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As I have already set down, the pursuers had ceased all efforts to keep their whereabouts a secret, and were now working at the oars regardless of the noise, therefore it was I could say with reasonable certainty that they were not more than fifty yards distant.

There were as yet no signs of the coming day; but I knew beyond a question that we had considerably less than an hour of darkness at the longest remaining; after which time both pursuer and pursued would be exposed to view.

We had but one pair of oars in the boat, therefore could not increase our speed beyond what one of us might be able to do working singlehanded, and I believed that our enemies would overhaul us within half an hour.

Such thoughts as these were in my mind as I speculated upon our chances for freedom, when David moved softly toward me, crouching in the bottom of the boat as he whispered:

"I can make out the line of shore ahead, and we

now have so much the best of those behind that I believe we might land and get a good start in a race through the forest."

"Would you leave the Storks behind?" I asked, taking good care that my voice might not be overheard by the enemy.

"It would be better they went free than that we were taken prisoners into New York."

"They now know more than at the time of Ben's escape. After all we have said in their presence it is plain to them that your uncle and Master Baldwin have been concerned in a plot. By setting them free we are condemning those two."

This was a view of the case which had not occurred to David, and he was far too brave a lad to bring ruin upon others, even though silence should cost him dearly.

"We must fight to the last," I whispered after a short pause, during which I bent myself to the oars with even more vigor than before, if

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indeed that were possible. "There has been in
my mind for the past five minutes the idea that
if we find it impossible to escape, we should
make certain those miserable Tories are not able
to repeat what we have said."

"Meaning that you would——"

David did not complete the sentence, but I
understood what he would have said, and
replied as if the lad had spoken fully :

"Ay, it would be better they were sent out
of the world than that two honest men suffered
a shameful death."

For reply David lent his aid at the oars,
standing upright that he might push as I pulled,
and such action gave me hope when I was nigh
to despair.

I could tell by the motion of the boat beneath
me that she was gliding over the water more
swiftly with this additional weight on the
blades, and I whispered with no little show of
confidence :

"I believe we can yet win the race! It has been cowardly for me to give in as if we were already beaten."

"There is little wonder that you have done so. To me it has been this last five minutes as if we were the same as captured, and I could see the gallows before my eyes."

"Let us pull harder and talk less; we are spending our breath with no good results."

Then we fell silent, working at our full strength and expecting each instant to hear the singing of a musket ball; but none came.

Although both of us strained every muscle in the effort at escape, we took good care to row silently, and those who pursued must have been puzzled in the darkness to know exactly where we were.

On first taking up the oars I had given the little craft a sheer in toward the shore, and when, as nearly as I could judge, we were reasonably near the land, I sent her up river

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again. Of course I had no hope of escaping by such means, for our enemies in the rear knew beyond a doubt that we were making for Major Lee's camp; but it kept them guessing as to exactly where we were, therefore was the danger of being wounded by a musket ball greatly lessened.

Even while we were in such peril I found myself wondering how the prisoners might be faring, and questioning if they could live much longer, muffled as they were by the gags.

It hurt me, even while David's life and mine were hanging in the balance, so to speak, that the Storks should be thus tortured; but there was no remedy for it, and I tried vainly to steel my heart against the suffering which had been brought about by themselves solely in the hope of bringing us to a shameful death.

CHAPTER XII.

WITH LEE'S LEGION.

LEST I weary with too many words those who may chance to read these poor lines, that which followed shall be set down briefly; but the temptation to tell all David Rhinelanders or I did and said is very great, for at no time during the progress of the plot to capture a traitor were we in such exceeding peril.

After my comrade aided me at the oars it was as if the boat's speed was redoubled, and, thanks to our method of rowing, we proceeded with the most perfect silence, which was broken only by the swish of the water against her bow.

It is always darkest during the hour preced-

ing the coming of dawn, and this, as a matter of course, was greatly in our favor.

I think the prisoners had been gagged fully half an hour, and our craft was close under the bank of the river where the shadows were densest, when David whispered cautiously :

"I have been straining my ears these last five minutes, and fail to hear anything of the enemy. Let us hold up a moment to listen."

I acted on his suggestion at once, keeping the oars in the water simply in order to hold the craft under control, and although we literally held our breath lest the silence should be broken, nothing could be heard.

The pursuers had gone astray, and now were we in perplexity as to the proper course.

The enemy may have passed us unwittingly, in which case by keeping on we stood a good chance of coming direct upon them, or they might be holding near the middle of the river waiting for the light of day.

In either case it would have been unwise to stand on when there was little hope of gaining the encampment of Lee's Legion before sunrise, and I was fully prepared for the suggestion which David made.

"Why should we not pull in under the bank now, while it seems certain the enemy have been thrown off our trail? It will be advancing blindly to push on, not knowing where they are; and if it so chances we can remain hidden until daylight, we shall at least know where lies the greatest danger."

"It shall be as you say," I replied, all the more willing to follow his advice because I really believed we might be murdering our prisoners by thus keeping them gagged.

Half a dozen strokes of the oars were sufficient to send the boat so near the bank that she was hidden by the foliage, and once we pulled her close inshore the overhanging branches completely shut her out from view.

David made her fast to the trunk of a tree, and I pulled the boughs down here and there, until having satisfied myself that when the sun rose we would be hidden from view of any who might come within a dozen yards.

This done I stepped aft, and, first assuring myself that the Storks were yet breathing, said in a tone that must have convinced them I spoke in earnest :

"It is our purpose to give you a breathing spell. You know full well that we are pursued, since each did all he could to lead an enemy upon us. The gags are to be removed, and I promise faithfully, realizing that our lives depend upon the keeping of my word, that he who raises his voice above a whisper shall be killed without mercy."

Then I laid the boathook close at hand that they might see I was fully prepared to execute the threat, and pulled the gags from their mouths.

During five minutes or more I do not believe either of the Tories could have made the slightest outcry, so nearly stifled were they, and afterward I had but little fear of any alarm being given.

The Storks had suffered so much that their greatest fear was lest the torture be applied again, and both lay motionless, not daring even to whisper.

Had we continued the flight ten minutes longer I believe of a verity they would have died.

However, I was not in a mood to trust in their fears, for, cowards though they were, if the opportunity offered I knew full well what might be done; therefore the boathook was kept raised over them in readiness for a blow, and it would have fallen with deadly intent had either so much as whimpered.

David sat in the bow of the boat where he could have a view of the river, and in silence

the moments passed until the shadows of night gave way before the light of dawn.

It seemed to me, nervous and timorous as I was, as if a full half-day passed before it was possible to have a clear view of the water, and then we were in a measure relieved, for nothing of evil met our eager gaze.

Not a craft could be seen on the broad river, and while this was in the highest degree reassuring, we did not venture to continue the journey at once, for who could say but that our enemies were higher up the stream, between us and the encampment we were so eager to gain?

The Storks never so much as whimpered from the moment we relieved their mouths until it was time to resume the journey.

The suffering they had endured was sufficient to quiet them for so long a time as we might choose to remain in the boat, and although their limbs must have been cramped from holding

one position so long, I failed to see either so much as lift a finger.

Present suffering or danger was all the cowards appeared to understand; neither looked very far into the future save to plot mischief or lay plans for enjoyment.

It is not necessary that I set down here all that David and I said and did during the three hours or more while we remained hidden behind the foliage at the bank of the river.

It is enough if I say we believed it wisest to loiter there until the sun was high in the heavens, and so long was this time of waiting that even our prisoners must have felt a certain sense of relief when the boat was pushed out into the current.

We saw no craft from sunrise until we had pulled several miles upstream, and then it was only a small sloop, heavily laden, which came into view.

Her we did not fear, and, rowing steadily but

not swiftly, lest need should arise for a burst of speed, we pushed on toward the encampment where Sergeant Champe's comrades were doubtless condemning him as a traitor.

We talked but little, David and I, during this pull up the river, for strength was needed at the oars, and we were not minded to waste our breath on such conversation as could safely be indulged in while we had as prisoners the two Storks.

It was near to noon when we came within sight of Major Lee's camp, and, pulling inshore, were hailed by the sentinel.

Remembering our previous experience, I was not minded to go ashore until the major had news of our arrival, for neither David nor I believed it safe to give the prisoners an opportunity of talking with the men lest, having heard some incautious word from our lips, they might be able to repeat that which should be kept a secret.

Therefore it was that, resting on our oars, David spoke the sentinel who had challenged us, by saying:

"We would have immediate speech with Major Lee."

"You'll be forced to come ashore, I reckon," the man replied with a laugh, "for our commander isn't in the custom of receiving visits on the river."

"Say that two lads would speak with him at once on business of importance," David said sharply; whereupon the man appeared affronted, and was on the point of turning away, after saying angrily:

"You may stay there till you're gray-headed without having your wishes gratified."

"It is of the utmost importance that he receive information of our coming!" I added, speaking sternly.

"Come ashore, and in due time you will have speech with him, providing it be possible

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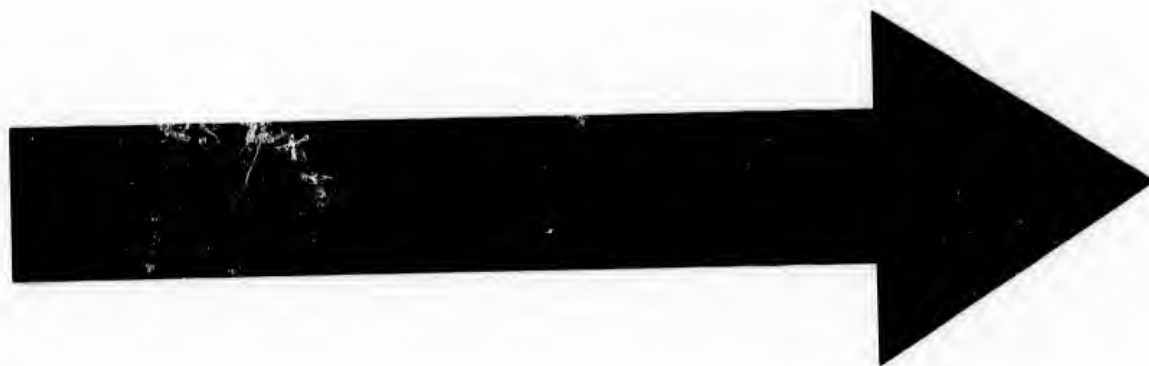
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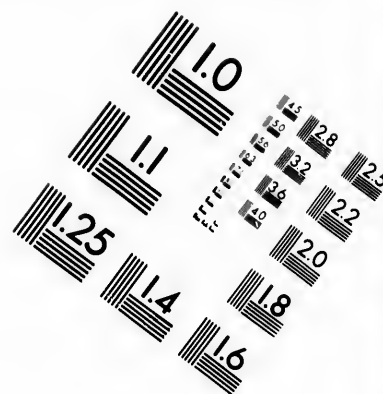
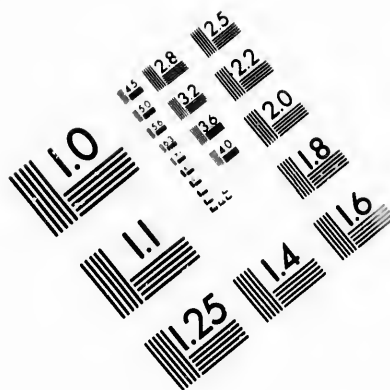
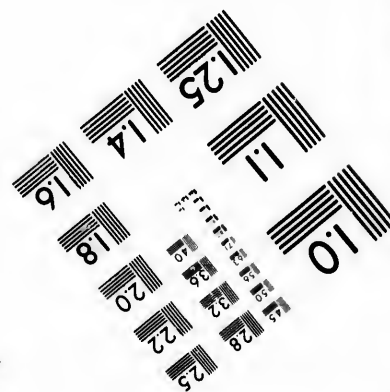
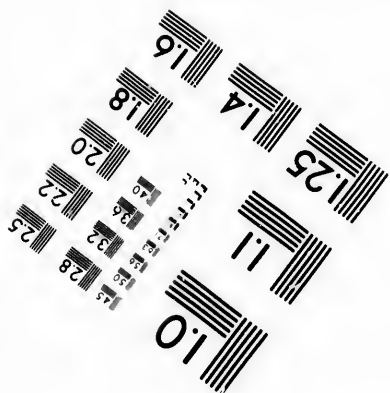
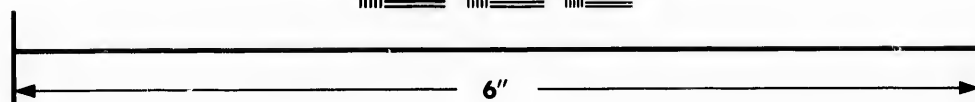
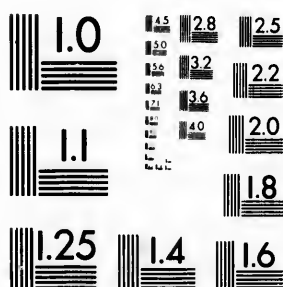


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to give proper account of yourselves," the sentinel replied, now thoroughly disgruntled.

"There are grave reasons why we must not land until he has knowledge of our being here, and I assure that he will be in no pleasant mood if we are kept long waiting."

By this time the man must have understood that we had good and sufficient reasons for speaking as we did, and after the briefest delay, he shouted for the corporal of the guard.

Fortunately this last soldier was one whom we had seen on our previous visit, and, without waiting to parley, he immediately carried the message to his commander.

Five minutes later Major. Lee appeared, and not until then did we pull inshore. David leaped out as the boat's bow touched the bank, and said in a low tone to the commander :

"We have with us two prisoners who must not be allowed to speak with your men until after our story has been told."

"That shall be attended to in proper fashion ; but first tell me, lad, why was it that no one came to the rendezvous on either night ? I was there with an escort ; but failed to see any to whom I might apply for information."

"The plot has failed most signally, and Sergeant Champe is on his way south with the American Deserters' Legion. We will tell the whole story once our prisoners have been cared for."

Then it was that Major Lee gave the necessary orders.

Two men whom he could trust implicitly were ordered to carry the Storks to the building which served as prison, and there keep the closest guard over them.

"See to it that neither of the villains has an opportunity of speaking with you, or any other. Guard their tongues as you do their bodies, and take good care such orders be strictly carried out."

After this we had no hesitation in following the major to his quarters, and once there our sorrowful story was soon told, for we did not waste time in relating our own experiences.

Major Lee's sorrow because of Sergeant Champe's disagreeable, if not dangerous, position can well be fancied.

I could see that he was more disturbed in mind than he would have us believe; and after some time he made as if to dismiss the subject by saying :

"It is the fortune of war, lad, and those who have embarked in this struggle against the king know that their lives are staked on the hazard. Champe would suffer less amid all the horrors of the prison ships than he will while obeying the commands, as he must perforce do, of that arch traitor, Benedict Arnold. However, our regrets and speculations can avail him but little. We had best think only of ourselves."

"And in doing so I venture to add, with all

due respect, that it is necessary closer guard be kept over the prisoners than was exercised when Ben alone was in camp, for should one or both succeed in returning to New York, Master Baldwin's life would speedily be sacrificed because of the part he has played in this affair, while Master Schuster's position would be decidedly uncomfortable, if not absolutely dangerous."

The major remained silent during several moments, as if in deep thought, and then said, speaking slowly as one does when weighing well each word:

"You are right, and even though there is no good reason for extra precaution, it should be taken because of the service rendered. Just at present you two are in greatest danger, for in case of being taken prisoners I have no question but that the Britishers would hang you off-hand. The Storks shall be forwarded to headquarters at once, with a detailed report of their capture,

and then I will come to some conclusion regarding yourselves."

"Meaning to take certain steps for our safety, sir?" David asked.

"Ay, lad, it strikes me that is the most important business on hand just at present."

"It was agreed that we should be allowed to enlist, in case the plot was carried through successfully," my comrade said in a most respectful tone.

"More than permission to enlist was promised," the major replied, with a smile. "It would have been a scurvy reward to allow only that which we are most eager to have. Recruits are ever welcome, and you are entitled to something of value."

Now it was that I took part in the conversation, by saying decidedly:

"We did not embark in the enterprise, sir, with any hope of reward. It was in the expectation of being able to serve the Cause that we

agreed to do whatsoever Sergeant Champe desired, and now we simply ask permission to enlist."

"That is yours already, and I will be right glad to have such lads under my command. For the present consider yourselves as having the liberty of the camp. Do whatsoever pleases you, and if I can contribute in the slightest degree to your comfort or happiness, it is only necessary to make your wishes known. Later, when I have had time to consider the matter well, we will decide upon a future course.

Having said this Major Lee walked rapidly away in the direction of the shanty which served as a guardhouse, and we knew he had taken it upon himself to make certain the Storks were sent out of the encampment under proper and sufficient guard.

Now it was that for a time David and I had good reason to feel as if we were of some consequence in the world.

More than one of the men in the Legion understood that we had been engaged in a work of importance, otherwise the commander would not have bestowed so much time upon us, and these took it upon themselves to see that we were treated as honored guests.

Had David and I performed some wondrous deed for the benefit of the Cause we could not have received more consideration from the rank and file, and but for the fact that we were growing woefully homesick for a word from our mothers, we might have become so puffed up with pride as to be disagreeable.

It can well be understood that we had longed most fervently from the first hour of leaving home, for information regarding those whom we loved so dearly, and now we were in comparative safety was the desire all the greater.

We knew, as has already been set down, that Master Baldwin had carried to our homes the story of what we had done, and why we were

forced to seek protection in the camp of Lee's Legion; but what we hungered after was an assurance from our mothers that they would not mourn because of our absence, even though both of us knew full well that such assurance could not truly be given.

It was on the morning after our arrival that we were made happy and sad at the same moment, and I cannot say which feeling was the stronger.

On the night previous Ben and Jethro Stork had been taken to headquarters under a strong guard, and it was reasonable to suppose that we had seen the last of them, for once the Tories were free to return to their British friends, very much of information which the Cause demanded should be kept a secret could be given by them, therefore would both be looked after so sharply as must prevent the possibility of escape.

We had not seen Major Lee since our first interview; it was said that he also had gone to

headquarters, and I believed it was for the purpose of repeating to General Washington all we had told him regarding the failure of the plot.

David and I had been escorted around the encampment until there was nothing left to show us, and had gone down to the river's bank that we might be alone for the time to talk of home matters.

While thus mournfully engaged we saw a skiff coming up the river, in which were two men, and David said idly, never for an instant dreaming that he might be hitting upon the truth :

"It would be odd if Uncle Jacob was forced to flee from New York because of the slight part he played in the attempt to capture a traitor."

"There isn't the shadow of a possibility he could be suspected of having a hand in that matter," I replied confidently. "Jacob Schuster

was far too shrewd to do that which might involve him with the Britishers, and I warrant you he is now repenting the little part he did play."

The words were no more than spoken before David cried excitedly :

"It is Uncle Jacob ! I believe the man at the oars is none other than Master Baldwin !"

Even while insisting that such could not be the case, I recognized the cautious merchant, and in another moment we knew beyond a peradventure that it was our true friend who plied the oars.

Burning with impatience to learn why they had left New York, and what had occurred to give Master Schuster so much courage as to permit of his openly visiting a "rebel" encampment, David and I hurried down to the water's edge.

Never before had we received such a warm reception from Jacob Schuster. It really seemed

as if he felt a certain sense of relief because we were there to greet him, and after a most hearty hand-clasp the merchant asked :

"Where is Major Lee?"

"He went to headquarters last evening, sir, and it is not certain that he has yet returned."

"Lead me to his tent; I would speak with him at once."

However willing we were to do as he wished, it was not possible for David and I to introduce visitors to the encampment, as we speedily learned when the officer of the day, summoned by one of the sentinels, came up to see who the newcomers might be.

To him Master Schuster repeated his request, and the officer at once led him away, leaving us alone with Master Baldwin. The kindly gentleman did not wait for us to give words to the questions he could read in our eyes; but said, immediately it were possible to speak without being overheard :

"Ay, lad, we are fugitives, and have come to seek protection here. I to enlist in the Legion, and Master Schuster to devise some means—if Major Lee will aid—to throw off the suspicion which has been aroused against him."

"Then the plot is known?" I cried in dismay, thinking what would be Sergeant Champe's fate in such a case.

"Not so, lad; fortunately that yet remains a secret."

"Then why are you two fugitives?" David asked impatiently.

"We are accused of having a hand in the murder of Ben and Jethro Stork."

"Their murder!" I cried in bewilderment.

"Ay, lad. It is known that they set out to capture you. Neither has returned, and I was seen in your company on the river the morning after our dismal failure. To be arrested now might lead to the discovery of what we would have done, and thus Sergeant Champe be con-

demned to a shameful death ; therefore have I decided to leave the work of spying, since my usefulness has departed, and take up arms for the Cause."

"But Master Schuster?" I cried, still in a daze of bewilderment. "Will he enlist?"

"He proposes that Major Lee shall send word into New York that the Storks are alive, which will put an end to the charge of murder."

"How could the Britishers have suspected him? Surely he was careful enough not to have any hand in the matter, save to put himself in line to receive the reward in case we had succeeded."

"You were seen eating supper with him, and immediately afterward, so it is said by the British spies, visited him at his place of business. It caused suspicion when the frugal merchant spent overmuch money at the Black Horse Inn with two lads as guests. He, ever cautious, sought out this encampment immediately after

learning these facts, and before an order could be made for his arrest."

It is enough if I say here that Master Schuster succeeded in clearing his own skirts with but little difficulty.

Major Lee was perfectly willing to make such a statement as could not be discredited, regarding the Storks, and sent it to New York, when, as David and I heard a few days later, the charge of murder was suddenly dropped.

At this point the story of our attempt to capture the traitor has been fully told, and there can be no question but that he who reads it is, as were we two lads, sore at heart because that which promised to be a brave adventure came to naught.

As a matter of course Major Lee received Master Baldwin, David and myself as recruits, and we were yet with the Legion on that day in North Carolina when Sergeant Champe, having after many a long, weary week, escaped

from his commander, the traitor, came into camp, to the intense surprise of all save we four who were concerned in the plot.

I would there was time for me to set down the details of his reception when all the story had been told the men, while they were drawn up in line, with the sergeant, Master Baldwin, David and I facing the ranks.

However, it may be that at some time in the future, when we shall have given the redecoats a few more doses such as we administered to Lord Rawdon's troops the day after the sergeant came into camp, the opportunity will present itself for me to set down in better fashion than I have been able to do in this tale, all that was said and done when the men of Lee's Legion understood that their sergeant-major had never been in truth a deserter, but one who risked everything, even life itself, for the Cause.

THE END.

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"Harry Sandwith, the Westminster boy, may fairly be said to heat Mr. Henty's record. His adventures will delight boys by the audacity and peril they depict. . . . The story is one of Mr. Henty's best."—*Saturday Review*.

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"The story, from the critical moment of the killing of the sacred cat to the perilous exodus into Asia with which it closes, is very skillfully constructed and full of exciting adventures. It is admirably illustrated."—*Saturday Review*.

With Washington at Monmouth: A Story of Three Philadelphia Boys. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

Three Philadelphia boys, Seth Graydon "whose mother conducted a boarding-house which was patronized by the British officers;" Enoch Ball, "son of that Mrs. Ball whose dancing school was situated on Letitia Street," and little Jacob, son of "Chris, the Baker," serve as the principal characters. The story is laid during the winter when Lord Howe held possession of the city, and the lads aid the cause by assisting the American spies who make regular and frequent visits from Valley Forge. One reads here of home-life in the captive city when bread was scarce among the people of the lower classes, and a reckless prodigality shown by the British officers, who passed the winter in feasting and merry-making while the members of the patriot army but a few miles away were suffering from both cold and hunger. The story abounds with pictures of Colonial life skillfully drawn, and the glimpses of Washington's soldiers which are given show that the work has not been hastily done, or without considerable study.

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"Facing Death" is a story with a purpose. It is intended to show that a lad who makes up his mind firmly and resolutely that he will rise in life, and who is prepared to face toil and ridicule and hardship to carry out his determination, is sure to succeed. The hero of the story is a typical British boy, dogged, earnest, generous, and though "shamefaced" to a degree, is ready to face death in the discharge of duty.

"The tale is well written and well illustrated, and there is much reality in the characters. If any father, clergyman, or schoolmaster is on the lookout for a good book to give as a present to a boy who is worth his salt, this is the book we would recommend."—*Standard*.

Tom Temple's Career. By HORATIO ALGER. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

Tom Temple, a bright, self-reliant lad, by the death of his father becomes a boarder at the home of Nathan Midd'eton, a penurious insurance agent. Though well paid for keeping the boy, Nathan and his wife endeavor to bring Master Tom in line with their parsimonious habits. The lad ingeniously evades their efforts and revolutionizes the household. As Tom is heir to \$10,000, he is regarded as a person of some importance until by an unfortunate combination of circumstances his fortune shrinks to a few hundreds. He leaves Plympton village to seek work in New York, whence he undertakes an important mission to California, around which center the most exciting incidents of his young career. Some of his adventures in the far west are so startling that the reader will scarcely close the book until the last page shall have been reached. The tale is written in Mr. Alger's most fascinating style, and is bound to please the very large class of boys who regard this popular author as a prime favorite.

Maori and Settler: A Story of the New Zealand War. By J. A. HENTY. With full-page illustrations by ALFRED PEARSE. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

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The two boys are from Portsmouth, N. H., and are introduced in August, 1781, when on the point of leaving home to enlist in Col. Scammell's regiment, then stationed near New York City. Their method of traveling is on horseback, and the author has given an interesting account of what was expected from boys in the Colonial days. The lads, after no slight amount of adventure, are sent as messengers—not soldiers—into the south to find the troops under Lafayette. Once with that youthful general they are given employment as spies, and enter the British camp, bringing away valuable information. The pictures of camp-life are carefully drawn, and the portrayal of Lafayette's character is thoroughly well done. The story is wholesome in tone, as are all of Mr. Otis' works. There is no lack of exciting incident which the youthful reader craves, but it is healthful excitement brimming with facts which every boy should be familiar with, and while the reader is following the adventures of Ben Jaffreys and Ned Allen he is acquiring a fund of historical lore which will remain in his memory long after that which he has memorized from text-books has been forgotten.

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This story hinges on a fortune left to Sam Willett, the hero, and the fact that it will pass to a disreputable relative if the lad dies before he shall have reached his majority. The Vigilance Committee of Hurley's Gulch arrest Sam's father and an associate for the crime of murder. Their lives depend on the production of the receipt given for money paid. This is in Sam's possession at the camp on the other side of the cañon. A messenger is dispatched to get it. He reaches the lad in the midst of a fearful storm which floods the cañon. His father's peril urges Sam to action. A raft is built on which the boy and his friends essay to cross the torrent. They fail to do so, and a desperate trip down the stream ensues. How the party finally escape from the horrors of their situation and Sam reaches Hurley's Gulch in the very nick of time, is described in a graphic style that stamps Mr. Calhoun as a master of his art.

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Search for the Silver City : A Tale of Adventure in Yucatan.

By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

Two American lads, Teddy Wright and Neal Emery, embark on the stern yacht *Day Dream* for a short summer cruise to the tropics. Homeward bound the yacht is destroyed by fire. All hands take to the boats, but during the night the boat is cast upon the coast of Yucatan. They come across a young American named Cummings, who entertains them with the story of the wonderful Silver City, of the Chan Santa Cruz Indians. Cummings proposes with the aid of a faithful Indian ally to brave the perils of the swamp and carry off a number of the golden images from the temples. Pursued with relentless vigor for days their situation is desperate. At last their escape is effected in an astonishing manner. Mr. Otis has built his story on an historical foundation. It is so full of exciting incidents that the reader is quite carried away with the novelty and realism of the narrative.

Frank Fowler, the Cash Boy. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

Thrown upon his own resources Frank Fowler, a poor boy, bravely determines to make a living for himself and his foster-sister Grace. Going to New York he obtains a situation as cash boy in a dry goods store. He renders a service to a wealthy old gentleman named Wharton, who takes a fancy to the lad. Frank, after losing his place as cash boy, is enticed by an enemy to a lonesome part of New Jersey and held a prisoner. This move recoils upon the plotter, for it leads to a clue that enables the lad to establish his real identity. Mr. Alger's stories are not only unusually interesting, but they convey a useful lesson of pluck and manly independence.

Budd Boyd's Triumph; or, the Boy Firm of Fox Island. By WILLIAM P. CHAPMAN. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

The scene of this story is laid on the upper part of Narragansett Bay, and the leading incidents have a strong salt-water flavor. Owing to the conviction of his father for forgery and theft, Budd Boyd is compelled to leave his home and strike out for himself. Chance brings Budd in contact with Judd Floyd. The two boys being ambitious and clear sighted, form a partnership to catch and sell fish. The scheme is successfully launched, but the unexpected appearance on the scene of Thomas Bagsley, the man whom Budd believes guilty of the crimes attributed to his father, leads to several disagreeable complications that nearly caused the lad's ruin. His pluck and good sense, however, carry him through his troubles. In following the career of the boy firm of Boyd & Floyd, the youthful reader will find a useful lesson—that industry and perseverance are bound to lead to ultimate success.

The Errand Boy; or, How Phil Brent Won Success. By

HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

The career of "The Errand Boy" embraces the city adventures of a smart country lad who at an early age was abandoned by his father. Philip was brought up by a kind-hearted innkeeper named Brent. The death of Mrs. Brent paved the way for the hero's subsequent troubles. Accident introduces him to the notice of a retired merchant in New York, who not only secures him the situation of errand boy but thereafter stands as his friend. An unexpected turn of fortune's wheel, however, brings Philip and his father together. In "The Errand Boy" Philip Brent is possessed of the same sterling qualities so conspicuous in all of the previous creations of this delightful writer for our youth.

The Slate Picker: The Story of a Boy's Life in the Coal Mines.

By HARRY PRENTICE. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

This is a story of a boy's life in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. There are many thrilling situations, notably that of Ben Burton's leap into the "lion's mouth"—the yawning shale in the breakers—to escape a beating at the hands of the savage Spilkins, the overseer. Gracie Gordon is a little angel in rags, Terence O'Dowd is a manly, sympathetic lad, and Enoch Evans, the miner-poet, is a big-hearted, honest fellow, a true friend to all whose burdens seem too heavy for them to bear. Ben Burton, the hero, had a hard road to travel, but by grit and energy he advanced step by step until he found himself called upon to fill the position of chief engineer of the Kohinoor Coal Company.

A Runaway Brig; or, An Accidental Cruise. By JAMES OTIS.

12mo, cloth, price \$1.00.

"A Runaway Brig" is a sea tale, pure and simple, and that's where it strikes a boy's fancy. The reader can look out upon the wide shimmering sea as it flashes back the sunlight, and imagine himself aloft with Harry Vandyne, Walter Morse, Jim Libby and that old shell-back, Bob Bruce, on the brig Bonita, which lands on one of the Bahama keys. Finally three strangers steal the craft, leaving the rightful owners to shift for themselves aboard a broken-down tug. The boys discover a mysterious document which enables them to find a buried treasure, then a storm comes on and the tug is stranded. At last a yacht comes in sight and the party with the treasure is taken off the lonely key. The most exacting youth is sure to be fascinated with this entertaining story.

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