

MY CAPTIVE.

By JOSEPH A. ALTSELER,
Author of "A Soldier of Manhattan,"
"The Sun of Saratoga," Etc.

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I had forgotten the coat, which, having served me well twice, might serve me very well the third time.

"I must get rid of this coat soon," I said. Then I added as an afterthought: "But what is it to you were I hanged? It would be only one more wicked rebel meeting the fate that he deserves. Why should you put yourself to trouble for me?"

I looked back over my shoulder, though I may not have had the appearance of looking. I saw a flash as of the morning that was around us overspread her face, and she looked afar over my head, her eyes shining with something I had not seen there before. I asked her no more, but the morning continued to grow into a splendor and radiance passing all previous knowledge of mine.

The sun crept up, and the light reached all the earth, west as well as the east. We were still in the red clay road, winding among lone hills and deserted fields and patches of primitive forests. We came to a brook of cool, clear water, babbling over the stones.

"Here we rest," I said, "and eat breakfast. Jump down, Julia."

She sprang down, and all three drank at the brook—Julia, Old Put and I. Then we ate the remains of our provisions, while the horse found some tender stems of grass by the brookside.

"I think we had better leave the road now," I said, "for this is the enemy's country, and I do not want to meet any more of Tarleton's men."

It was my purpose to make a circuit around Tarleton and join Morgan, and she made no objection, but suggested that she walk with me.

"I am tired of riding," she said, "and it will be good for the horse too." I threw the bridle reins over Old Put's head, told him to follow us, and we started on our great curve around Tarleton. Being a Charleston man, I knew very little of that part of the country, but in my campaigning with Greene and Morgan I had obtained some idea of the lay of the land, and I knew the general course I ought to follow.

Boasted. I felt very good, and I was full of enthusiasm. But little of the country had been cut over, and as the forest was not dense there was nothing to stay our progress. We marched steadily on, and what impressed us most was the desolation of the land. But thinly peopled in the first place, everybody here, as in the country through which we had traveled the day previous, had fled

before the advance of the armies. We passed two abandoned cabins in the country fields, but saw no other sign of human habitation. Yet it did not sadden me. The sunshine was beautiful, and the old world was fresh and young.

"In a few years, Julia," I said, "when the last of Tarleton's raiders is sent across the sea or to his final home and we win our freedom, all this will be peaceful and populated."

She said nothing—noting about the valor of the English and the speedy destruction of the rebels—but looked abroad over the country with kindling eyes. It was fair to see, even in winter, with its rolling hills and sloping valleys and streams of sparkling water, a fit place for a noble race of freemen to grow. But just then it was the most unhappy part of all our continent. Neither man nor woman could expect merry where Tarleton's raiders came, and all the books will tell you, and tell you rightly, that the war was more ferocious in the south than in the north and most ferocious of all on the soil of South Carolina. Where partisan bands ravage and fight and the people of the soil themselves are set and embittered against each other then war is seen at its worst.

CHAPTER IX.

SEEN IN A DREAM.

We were young and vigorous. The girl was tall, straight, almost as strong as I, and mile after mile dropped behind us. The air had the crisp, fresh coolness of a South Carolina winter, like a northern day in autumn. The sun, climbing steadily toward the heavens, shone in full splendor and in an atmosphere as pure as that over the sea. We could see far to the right and to the left and before us, but we saw neither men nor horses, just the rolling hills and valleys and the straggling forests.

"So much the better," I said to Julia, "for the lonelier the country is the less obstacle there will be to our flight. Morgan is retreating toward the Broad river, and as we surely have passed around Tarleton by this time we ought to overtake him by night. I hope he will have plenty to eat, for I think that you and I will miss our dinner."

"Do you know," said she, "I begin to hope that Tarleton will not overtake Morgan at all? It would be an awful noise, and perhaps some of the rebels are good men after all."

"Perhaps."

"Couldn't the war be ended in some way without more years of fighting—by some sort of compromise? Suppose each side should give up a little."

"We might make the proposition, you and I, to congress and the king."

"Don't jest. I'm in earnest."

"Then I'm afraid there's no chance for a compromise, and there hasn't been for some time. You English like to boast of your courage and tenacity, and we have the same boast of ourselves. It has to be fought out to the end, win or lose."

nant for green grass, stopping at times to look benevolently at us and to indicate that his state of mind was content. We were both hungry, but we had nothing better to do than to watch Old Put nibble for his dinner, which he did very industriously until I called to him and told him it was time to start.

Julia again refused to mount the horse, and we strolled together. I felt safe now, and, consoing to a cabin whose owner had been bold enough to remain and guard his own, I offered to trade him the fine British coat I wore for any coat of his own, however old, provided it would hold together on my shoulders. He produced the coat and made the trade, by which he was a great gainer, and asked me no question, differing thereon from the country people of the northern regions through which I had campaigned so long. Moreover, he looked very curiously at the tall girl with me.

"You are American," he said to me just before we started.

"Yes."

"The lady looks English."

"She is English."

"It is very strange."

"You are right. It is strange."

Such were my thoughts as we walked away. The man who seemed to live there alone, half hunter, half farmer, stood in his cabin door and watched us until we passed out of sight.

I prevailed upon the girl to ride to awahle, but after an hour on horse back she dismounted again, saying that she preferred to walk. About the middle of the afternoon we met a farmer who confirmed my belief that Morgan had passed on toward the Broad river, though he knew nothing of Tarleton. An hour later as we were passing through thick woods some one cried out to us to halt. I almost sprang up in my astonishment, and the girl uttered a little cry of fright, for neither of us supposed any one to be near, having seen nothing and heard nothing, and Old Put, I suppose, was tired of dreaming.

"Stop," I said to Julia. "It may be friends."

Two men on horseback came from a position among the dense trees. They were dressed in rough homespun gray and looked like Americans, the two facts together inducing the belief that they were militia scouts of Morgan's.

"An American and his lady," said the foremost to me. "You are a soldier, are you not?"

"Yes," I replied.

"And on the way to Morgan, too, I take it. Keep straight to the north-west, and you will overtake him. We are good patriots too."

"Thank you," I said. "Morgan seems to keep a good watch. I hope that we will overtake him before midnight."

He had ridden very close to me.

"I don't think it, my fine fellow," he said. "We will take great care of both you and the lady, for we are Tarleton's scouts, not Morgan's."

I saw then that the appearance and manner of the men had deceived me, but no thought of surrender to them entered my mind. I snatched at my pistol. The man, who was as wary as a panther, saw the movement, and, drawing his own weapon, we fired almost at the same time. I saw him reel in his saddle, but not fall, and I was conscious of a thrill of pain in my head, followed by a heavy, crushing sensation, as if I had been struck by a hammer. I staggered, falling to the ground upon my hands and knees. Consciousness left me entirely for a few minutes, and then came back dimly, just enough for me to dream and to create events for myself.

that I had been with her were equal to a year and a half of ordinary time.

"Would you bring me a little of that cool water to drink in your cap?" I asked. "I see that the cap is wet already, and it won't hurt it."

She brought the water, and I drank. It was as cold as ice and as refreshing as nectar as it ran down my throat. I have seen men lying on the battlefield begging for water as if it were the one great gift of heaven to man.

I felt twice the man that I was a minute before. The girl was strangely quiet, even shy, and more than ever I felt as if it were my chief duty to protect her.

"No, Julia," I said; "this rebel against the king means to live. So far from dying, I haven't had anything more than a knock-down which has left a sore spot on my head and a little ache inside it, but I can travel as well as ever. Here, Old Put is waiting for you. Get up and ride."

But she declined with indignation.

"I will not do that," she said. "You may be a rebel—in fact, I know you are—but you shall not walk while you are wounded. You must ride."

As I was still a little dizzy I yielded at last, though I did not like to do it, and rode for a couple of hours. Then, feeling as strong as ever, I dismounted and made Julia take her turn on horseback. But at the end of an hour she, too, dismounted, and we walked together, as before, not talking much, but happy. The sun was again retreating before the night, and the western skies were aflame. The light fell full upon the girl's face, and her beauty, splendid and glowing before, was tender and spiritual now.

"We shall be in Morgan's camp soon," Julia said, "and I will have to resign my prisoner."

"I shall consider myself your prisoner until I am retaken by the English," she said.

I did not reply, but I was willing to accept my responsibilities.

Old Put, who was walking slowly behind us after his custom, raised his head and neighed. It was not a whinny, but a loud, sonorous neigh that could be heard afar. It was full of meaning. And a quarter of a mile ahead of us on one of the open ridges I saw the cause—a troop of a dozen horsemen riding toward us at a half gallop. Old Put neighed again, loud and promptly.

"I thought we got to escape into the woods," exclaimed Julia in alarm. "There is time yet. Those troopers may be English."

She did not seem to notice the strange loss of a suggestion from her that she hide from the English, but I was confident.

"They are not English," I said. "They are Americans. Old Put knows his friends. Trust him."

In truth, the horse uttered his loud and joyous neigh a third time, and I can not the slightest apprehension for it was impossible to deceive Old Put when he was wide awake.

The horsemen saw us and quickened their pace to a gallop. As they approached I could see the contours of the Continental buff and blue, and, telling Julia that it was all right, we walked gravely on to meet them. Old Put, his demonstrations of joy made, followed after with equal sobriety.

They were dashing riders, those men, and their curiosity must have been aroused by the sight of the girl, for they came on at the full, swinging gallop of the good cavalryman and quickly in closed us.

"Good evening, colonel," I said to the leader, saluting. "I am happy to see you again and to join your command."

"Good! Good, Marcel!" he exclaimed more than once. "This is precisely what we wanted to know. And so Mr. Tarleton is hot on our heels and will attack in the morning? Well, Philip Marcel, I think you will see tomorrow as pretty a little battle as was ever fought on this continent, and neither Colonel Tarleton nor I nor any other can tell yet what the result will be."

Julia was standing by me, and her old spirit suddenly flamed up.

"I can," she said, "and I only hope that instead of falling in the battle you will be taken a prisoner, for tomorrow night your army will not exist."

"Miss Howard," said Colonel Washington, bowing—I had given her name—"we have more admiration for the ladies than confidence in their military predictions."

CHAPTER X.
IN MORGAN'S CAMP.

Then we proceeded to the encampment, and Colonel Washington himself went with us, his plans being changed by my news. My head was buzzing with excitement. We were going to fight Tarleton at last, though with all the odds against us, numbers, discipline and arms, while Tarleton himself had won his reputation as the ablest and most successful cavalry commander in the British service. We might again experience the disgrace and the desert of Camden, but Morgan was no Cates, and perhaps on the other hand we might equal the exploit of the wild borderers at King's Mountain, though it was a little too much to hope for that. But still we would fight, and to a young man it always seems better to fight than to run.

"Old comrade," I said to my horse, "we fight the enemy tomorrow."

He nodded joyously and then looked gravely at the bandage around my head. "It is nothing," I said. "I will take it off tonight. My head is well."

He nodded again, as if all his troubles were over.

The wife of Captain Dunn of the South Carolina militia was in the camp, a lady whom I knew, my distant kinswoman, and Julia was given into her charge.

"Take good care of her, Cousin Anna," I said. "Remember that she is my prisoner."

"Your prisoner, is she?" she replied emphatically. "But remember, Philip, that the captor of often becomes the captive."

"Cousin Anna," I said indignantly, "I hope you are not going to preach our defeat by Tarleton on the very eve of battle. It will have a discouraging effect."

"I said nothing about the battle. Go and attend to your work, Philip. I will take care of the girl."

To Julia I said:

"We fight tomorrow, and I may not see you again."

Then I bent down and kissed her lips. She replied very simply and earnestly: "May you live through it, Philip!"

Cousin Anna's back was turned, and she did not see or hear.

I turned away and began to examine the camp and this field, destined to be the scene of a memorable battle which was itself the opening of one of the greatest, most skillful and successful campaigns ever conducted on the soil of our continent.

The campfires flared up in the cold January darkness. The men sat around their fires, talking and playing cards with old greasy cards or singing the songs of the hills and the woods. Some of the soldiers were asleep on their blankets or the bare ground, for we were always a ragged and unhoused army at the best, and only a few of the officers had tents.

A sharp breeze came from across the river, and the flames bent to it, their light flickering over wild, brown faces that knew only the open air, wind, rain, hail or whatever came. Most of them still carried their curved and carved powderhorns and their bullet pouches, so marvellous companions, over their shoulders, and their long, slender barrelled rifles, so unlike the British muskets, lay at their sides.

Smoke rose from the fires and blew in the faces of the men, deepening the brown and giving them another shade of the Indian. A curse mingled now and then with the singing and the talk of the card players, and from the borders of the camp came the stamp of the horses and an occasional neigh. In the darkness, half lighted by the reeling fires, the camp became a camp of wild men, whose faces the wavering light maddened into whatever grotesque images it chose.

We were but a little army, only 900 strong, but many of us had come great distances and from places wide apart. An arc of 1,000 miles would scarce cover all our homes. There were the militia, South Carolinians and Georgians, raw troops, whom one can never trust; then the little remnant of the brigade that De Kalb had led on the fatal day of Camden, splendid soldiers whose line the whole British army could not break, the survivors now eager to avenge the disgrace their brethren suffered on that day; then the stanch Virginia troops, whom we knew would never fail, and near them our two or three score of cavalry men under Washington—a little army, I say again, but led by such leaders as Morgan, Washington, Howard and Pickens. Down the slopes the sentinels were on watch, but there was no fear of a surprise, for the scouts were just bringing in word that Tarleton could not come before daylight, and then, owing to the slope and the open ground, his approach would be seen for a great distance.

The women talked the most, some about the coming battle, eagerly, volubly, others at out things the farthest from it, but in the same eager, voluble, unceasing way. The soldiers were silent, mostly, and busy with the aim and harmonizing of their usage were seeking the rest and sleep which they knew they would need. A tall, thin man, with a wild hair whom I took to be one of the frontiers at the great revival meetings so common on the border, rose in the midst of the camp and began to speak. Some listened, and some went on with the talking and card playing. I could hear the rustle of the pasteboard as the cards were shuffled. He was a fighting preacher, for he exhorted them to strike with all their strength in the coming battle and if they must die to die like Christian heroes. He prayed to God for the success of our arms, then stepped down from the stump on which he had stood and disappeared from my sight. He fought in the front line of the South Carolina militia the next day.

I sought my own place in our troop and lay down upon one half of my blanket, with the other half above me. Old Put snuggled at some fadder beside me.

"Waken me up in the morning when you see the first red gleam of the British coats, old comrade," I said, and, knowing that he would do it, I closed my eyes.

But sleep would not come just yet, and I opened my eyes again to see that the fires were sinking and the darkness was coming down nearer to the earth. Half the men were asleep already; the others were quiet, seeking sleep, and the steady breathing of near 1,000 men in a close space made a strange, whistling noise like that of the wind. A flaring blaze would throw a streak of light across a sleeping soldier, showing only a head or a leg or an arm, as if the man had been disoriented. I would hear the faint rattle of a sentry's firelock and the heavy hoof of a horse as he crowded his comrades for room. An officer in dumpy uniform would stalk across the hold to see that all was right, and over us all the wind moaned and the darkness gathered close up to the edge of the dying fires. Weakness overpowered my excited brain and nerves, and I slept.

CHAPTER XI.
THE BATTLE.

I was awakened in the morning by the shoving of Old Put's cold nose, which said as plain as speech, "Rise, my master, and prepare for the enemy." Most of the other men were up, and the camp cooks had breakfast ready, bread, meat and coffee. I threw off my blanket and began to eat with the others.

It was the misty region between night and day, but the scouts had come in, telling us that the British would soon be at hand, and by the time the breakfast had been dispatched the rim of the sun appeared in the east, and the day was coming. Then the general formed the line of battle, and each of us took his appointed place.

On the first rise of the slope stood the South Carolina and Georgia militia, the few troops in a line about a sixth of a mile long, under the command of the iron nerved Pickens. They were expected to give way before the charge of the enemy, but Pickens was ordered to hold them in line until they could deliver at least two volleys with the precision in firing which all these farmer boys possessed. Then they were to retire behind the veteran regulars, under Howard, who were on the second slope 150 yards in their rear. An equal distance behind the second rise sat we cavalrymen on our horses, commanded to pull

on our reins and wait the moment upon which the fate of the battle should turn.

Thus stood our little army, awaiting the rush of the battle which, as I have said, was to be one of the most important and decisive of our war. I stroked Old Put's neck and bade him be cool, but he was as calm as I and needed no such encouragement. The man on my left, Dick Patterson, a Marylander, suddenly whispered:

"Don't you hear that faint rumbling noise, Phil? That's the hoof beats of cavalry."

"Silence there!" called the colonel. No one spoke again; but, bending my ear forward, I could hear the far drum of the horses' hoofs, and I knew that the English army was coming. Old Put raised his head and sniffed the air. A red gleam appeared upon the horizon and broadened rapidly. A thrill and a deep murmur ran the length and breadth of our army.

"Oh, if those militiamen will only stand until the general bids them retire!" groaned the colonel.

That he believed they would not I knew, since it is a hard thing for new men to stand the rush of a seasoned army superior in numbers and equipment.

The sun was just swinging clear of the east and betokened a brilliant morning; yet it was cold with the raw damp that often creeps into a South Carolina winter, and I for one wished that the men could see a little more of the day and loosen their muscles a little better before they fought.

The whole British army now appeared in the plain, cavalry, infantry and fieldpieces in a great red square. I could plainly see the officers giving their orders, and I knew that the attack would come in a few minutes.

"Eleven hundred of them and no raw troops," said Colonel Washington. "We know that exactly from our scouts. I think our cavalry will have something to do today."

One officer, in the gayest of uniforms, I took to be the barbarian Tarleton, the British leader whom we hated most of all, for, with all his soldierly qualities, he was a barbarian, as most of his brother British officers themselves say.

I wanted to see the faces of those farmer boys down there on the slope who were to receive the first and fiercest rush of the enemy and to check it. I knew that many of them were white to the eyes, but their backs were toward me, and I could not see.

"They don't appear to move," whistled Patterson. "Their line looks as firm as if it were made of iron."

"Like untempered iron, I guess," I replied—"break like glass at the first shot."

A bugle sounded in the front of the British lines, and its notes, loud and mellow, came to us, but from our ranks rose only the heavy breathing and the shuffling of men and horses.

The trumpet call was followed by a cheer from more than a thousand throats, and then the British rushed upon us. The brass fieldpieces on their flanks opened with the thunder that betokens the artillery, and mingled with their roar were the rattle of the small arms, the throb of the drums and the clamorous hoof beats of their numerous cavalry.

The face of their red line blazed with fire, their red uniforms glowing through it like a bloody gleam, while the polished bayonets flashed in front.

"They are firing too soon and coming too fast," said Colonel Washington. "By God, look at those militiamen! They are standing like the Massachusetts farmers at Bunker Hill!"

It was so. The raw line of plowboys never wavered. It bent nowhere and was still as straight and strong as an iron bar. The plowboys knelt down, and as the British cheer rose and the red line flaming in front swept nearer, up went the long barrelled ordnance. I fancied that I could hear Pickens' command to fire, but I did not, and then all the rifles along a line a sixth of a mile long were fired so close together that the discharge was like the explosion of the greatest cannon in all the world.

The smoke rose in a thick black cloud, which a moment later floated a dozen feet above the earth and revealed the British squares, shattered and stopped, the ground in front of them red with the fallen, the officers shouting and reforming their lines, while our own plow lads, still as steady as the hills, were reloading their rifles with swift and steady hands.

We cavalrymen raised a great shout of approval, which the regulars on the rise in front of us took up and repeated. A second volley was all that we had asked from the militiamen, and it was sure now. Even as our cheer was echoing it was delivered with all the coolness and deadly precision of the first. Again the British line reeled and stopped, but they were veterans, led by the fiery Tarleton, and they came on a third time, only to meet the third of those deadly volleys, which swept down their front lines and blocked the way with their own dead and dying.

"The battle is won already," shouted Colonel Washington, "and it's the farmer boys of South Carolina and Georgia who have won it!"

Never did veteran troops show more gallantry and tenacity than those same farmer boys on that day. Two volleys were all that were asked of them, yet not merely once or twice, but many times, they poured in their deadly volleys at close range, again and again hurling back the British veterans, who doubted them in number and were supported by artillery and many cavalry, while we old soldiers in the two lines behind stood silent, not a gun or a sword raised.

(Continued on next page.)

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