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Adelaide in the garden. Frontispiece.

“He did not recognize me, and I am glad of it.” *Page 368.*

LITTLE BURR

THE WARWICK OF AMERICA

A T A L E O F T H E O L D
R E V O L U T I O N A R Y D A Y S

BY

CHARLES FELTON PIDGIN

AUTHOR OF

"QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER,"
"BLENNERHASSETT," "THE
CLIMAX," "THE LETTER H,"
"A NATION'S IDOL," ETC.

. ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ISAAC BREWSTER HAZELTON

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DATE OF PUBLICATION
MARCH 18, 1905

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO
Mrs. Mary R. Townsend,
OF THE CITY OF MEXICO

IN RECOGNITION OF HER AVOWED CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE CAUSE
WHICH HER FATHER SO WARMLY ESPOUSED
AND SO WARMLY DEFENDED

THE REHABILITATION OF AARON BURR

AS A DESERVED TRIBUTE
TO THE MEMORY OF HER DISTINGUISHED FATHER

HON. JERE CLEMENS

UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM ALABAMA, 1849-1853.

Author's Preface to Present Volume.

IN the preface to "Blennerhassett," I said: "For a hundred years one of the most remarkable of Americans has borne a weight of obloquy and calumny such as has been heaped upon no other man."

Since writing the above, I have found so much in print, and in the hundreds of letters received from all parts of the country containing corroborative evidence, that I consider my statement so fully fortified that it may now be received as incontestable.

To put my declaration in more homely, but explicit terms—for a hundred years the newspaper writers, biographers, and historians have made continual attacks upon the character of Aaron Burr; a few of the statements were literally true, some of them contained a slight admixture of truth, but the great majority were completely destitute of veracity, fabricated with unworthy motives, and passed from mouth to mouth, from hand to hand, from newspaper to newspaper, from magazine to magazine, from book to book—and all because there was no one to defend the memory of the dead from unjust aspersions and acrimonious attacks.

It seems strange that after these gentlemen have had, as might be said, the field to themselves for nearly a century—it seems strange, indeed,

that the enemies of Burr, for they are as much his enemies as were those whose words they repeat, should be so sensitive when a few words of praise are said of Aaron Burr, or when presentations of facts drawn from reliable sources show that the greater part of the stories told about him rest upon no foundation of fact and are not susceptible of proof.

They are so devoted to the worship of their idols, they have so idealized them beyond their natural and proper deserts, that they turn upon the iconoclast who would deprive their gods of any of their glory, not with statements of fact and arguments, but with bitter words of personal abuse.

Since the publication of "Blennerhassett," I have made a large and very interesting collection of such contributions. The greater part of them have appeared in the newspaper press, but many have reached me in the shape of written communications, some of them anonymous. I look forward with pleasurable anticipation to the day when these ephemeral publications shall become incorporated in my "Life of Aaron Burr," and so become part and parcel of history. Were it not for the prominence and perpetuity that I shall thus be able to confer upon them, they would, like the butterfly, have winged their flight for a day and then been lost to sight forever.

The relatives and friends of Colonel Burr have imitated his example by remaining silent too long in the face of repeated accusations. This has not been the case with his enemies, or, rather, their

successors, for as soon as a few statements of fact were made concerning Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and their co-partners in the conspiracy which led to Colonel Burr's political and social downfall, the defenders of these men began to call these statements abuse and vilification, apparently unmindful of the fact that others had the same right as themselves to indulge in that same sort of pastime. I have been the object of abuse and vituperation, and some readers have even gone so far as to suggest that measures be taken to prevent my writing such books in the future, they thinking, apparently, that this is a country in which but one opinion can be allowed on certain subjects, and that if any one disagrees with that opinion, he must be either a fool or a knave.

One correspondent informed me that if I did not cease attacking Alexander Hamilton, his friends had in their possession certain secret memoirs relating to Aaron Burr which would place that gentleman before the public in a worse light than he already occupied. In my reply I earnestly advised them to use every endeavor to secure the publication of these secret memoirs at the earliest possible moment; but I have looked for them in vain.

For years there has been in one of the school readers an alleged description of the grave of Aaron Burr. From reading it, one would infer that when a so-called traitor is buried in a well-kept cemetery, the grass above his grave dies of its own accord, the leaves fall from the surround-

ing trees, and the sun refuses to shine upon that portion of the cemetery. The story was pure invention and never possessed the slightest particle of truth. The object of the writer, of the publishers of the book, and of the teachers who use it in the schools may be easily understood.

On a par with the preceding story is one which for years ran the rounds of the press — that Aaron Burr lived in poverty during the last years of his life, and died neglected and unattended by friends. A complete refutation of this story was sent to several influential journals, but they refused to publish it. It finally appeared in a newspaper published at his birthplace, but no prominent journals have copied the same.

A few months ago an article appeared in a metropolitan daily, stating that Colonel Burr, after his duel with General Hamilton, stayed for three weeks at a house in a small town in the State of New Jersey, and that since that time the occupants of the house had suffered from fires, accidents, sudden deaths, lingering diseases, and all sorts of troubles, no doubt consequent upon the assumed fact that Colonel Burr had once been an occupant of the house.

I gathered from correspondence and published works incontestable historical data, which showed that Colonel Burr was never in the house in question, did not stay in the town mentioned for more than twenty minutes, being at that time on his way to the South. I sent my article to a prominent newspaper, but it was returned by the editor-in-chief, with the written comment: "It will, no

doubt, be very interesting to the inhabitants of the town in question." He knew that the matter was one of national interest and importance, yet he was not disposed to print in his paper anything that would redound to the credit of Aaron Burr or tend to free him from the effect of an untrue and unjust statement.

Following this preface will be found a biographical sketch of the late Hon. Jere. Clemens; also the preface written by him to his novel "The Rivals," which was published in 1859. Previous to that time, Col. Samuel L. Knapp, Matthew L. Davis, and James Parton had written biographies of Colonel Burr, but Senator Clemens was the first author to put into a work of fiction prominent events in the lives of Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. The novel covers that period in the lives of both these men, from their first connection with the Revolutionary army, up to the day of the fatal meeting on Weehawken Heights.

There are parts of "Little Burr" which are necessarily founded upon incidents contained in "The Rivals," and selections from the latter, which seemed applicable, have been incorporated, with appropriate changes, in this volume.

"Blennerhassett" and "The Climax" have been published in the order in which they were written, but not in the sequence in which they should be read when the entire series is complete. "Little Burr" should come first, "Blennerhassett" next, while "The Climax," as its name implies, should be the concluding volume of the trilogy.

Senator Clemens having given in his novel,

"The Rivals," a connected story of Colonel Burr's military life, in my opinion, justice required, before writing a work upon similar lines, that it should not be done without the knowledge of his descendants, if they could be found. After a correspondence, which for a long time seemed destined to be fruitless, I discovered that a married daughter of Senator Clemens was residing in the city of Mexico.

The following extracts from letters received from her show that the present volume has been prepared with her full knowledge and approval, both from a literary and a financial point of view.

* * * *

"You will readily understand that the terrible events of war and his own failing health prevented my father from carrying out his intention of continuing the story of Aaron Burr. I am very glad to know that you have undertaken the task of giving to the world the true history of the ill-fated man, and I am sure my father would have wished you God-speed, could he have known of your intention."

* * * *

"I have been intensely interested in your book, "Blennerhassett." It seems to me that you have drawn the character of Aaron Burr with wonderful accuracy, the result, doubtless, of long and patient research. You write as if you loved your subject, and yet you have extenuated none of his faults. This is one of the points which commends it to me and which must be evident to all fair-minded readers."

* * * *

"I have long desired to have some of my father's books reprinted, and therefore your proposal in regard to 'The Rivals' is very agreeable to me. I am quite ready to accept your proposal, for I know of no one so well qualified as yourself to do the necessary work to render the book acceptable to the public. If you decide upon undertaking the work of extending and revising 'The Rivals,' you may rely upon any assistance I can give you."

* * * *

"You have made me a liberal offer, which I shall not hesitate to accept, for, as a gentleman said to me not long ago, it would be a pity for 'The Rivals' to be entirely lost to the public."

* * * *

"Your letter of the 20th, with memorandum of agreement, has been received. I have read it over carefully and I herewith return it to you with my approval. Providing that my father is given full credit for the authorship of 'The Rivals,' and the pioneer work done by him to clear the memory of Aaron Burr from the stains resting upon it, I am perfectly willing that you should revise, amend, expunge, or add to the literary material contained in the said volume. It seems to me that you are carrying on the work begun by him."

* * * *

Until my "Life of Burr" has been published, and the verdict of the American people recorded upon it, no correct estimate can be made as to the effect or non-effect of my work, regard-

ing the rehabilitation of Aaron Burr. At the present time, I can only say that I have indubitable proofs in my possession that the objects and work of the *Aaron Burr Legion* are to receive recognition and support from the American people as such, if not from those who have assailed me in my work from the outset. My hopes are centered not in the present generation, but in those to come. The leaven of truth will be placed in the educational loaf, and the children of the future will find in their literary pabulum not a repetition of distorted stories, but a clear statement of facts, supported by trustworthy evidence, free from the bias of social, political, or religious prejudice.

C. F. P.

GRAY CHAMBERS,
20 MOUNT VERNON STREET,
BOSTON, MASS.
AUGUST, 1904.

Biographical Sketch of Hon. Jere. Clemens

JERE. CLEMENS, lawyer, soldier, and statesman, was born in Huntsville, Ala., Dec. 28, 1814. He obtained his education at La Grange College and the University of Alabama, from which latter institution he was graduated in 1833, at the age of nineteen. He then studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1834, when not twenty-one years of age. In 1838 he was appointed United States Marshal for the Northern District of Alabama. He served in the Alabama State Legislature from 1839 to 1841. In 1842 he went to Texas as Lieutenant-Colonel, having raised a company of volunteer riflemen. He again served in the Alabama State Legislature in 1843-44, and was a Presidential elector in the latter year. He was appointed Major of the 13th United States Infantry, March 3, 1847, made Lieutenant-Colonel of the 9th Infantry, July 16, and discharged July 20, 1848. He was then appointed Chief of the Depot of Purchases in Mexico. Why he served but four years in the United States Senate is thus explained: Dixon H. Lewis was elected by the Alabama Legislature to the United States Senate, his term of six years to begin March 4, 1847. He resigned on Nov. 25, 1848, and Gov. Reuben Chapman appointed ex-Gov. Benjamin Fitzpatrick to succeed him. When the Legislature convened in the fall of 1849, it elected

Jere. Clemens to fill out the unexpired term of four years of Mr. Lewis. Mr. Clemens served from Nov. 30, 1849, to and including March 3, 1853. Mr. Clemens again served as Presidential elector in 1856. He removed to Memphis, Tenn., and became editor of the Memphis *Eagle and Enquirer*, in 1859. He was a member of the secession convention in Alabama, but protested against its action; he subsequently gave way to the popular tide, and accepted the position of Major-General of the Alabama State Troops, to which he was appointed by the governor of the State. In 1863, Senator Clemens, accompanied by his wife, went to Philadelphia, on account of failing eyesight and feeble health. While there he had pneumonia, suffered a relapse, and died in May, 1865, soon after his return to Alabama. Mr. Clemens attained eminence at the bar while still young, and in the Senate took high rank as an able and eloquent debater. He was the author of novels which passed through several editions; one was entitled "Bernard Lile," published in Philadelphia, 1853; "Mustang Grey," published in 1857, and "The Rivals, a Tale of the Times of Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton," published in 1859. He was engaged in the preparation of a history of the Civil War, giving an insight into the character, causes, and conduct of the war in Northern Alabama, but it was left unfinished at his death.

A friend, in writing of him, says: "He was in many respects a most wonderful, extraordinary man. The vast comprehension of his mind, his

far-seeing statesmanship, his unshaken patriotism, his love of country above party, at the expense of personal preferment, point him out as one among ten thousand, even of the men of our day regarded as great men. Mr. Clay believed him one of the most brilliant intellects that ever adorned the annals of American history; he loved him devotedly and looked upon him as a representative public man of this country. I know this from Mr. Clay personally. His memory will be as enduring as the great principles of American Constitutional liberty."

Preface to "The Rivals"

(Published in 1859)

BY THE LATE HON. JERE. CLEMENS

Author of "Bernard Lile" and "Mustang Grey."

IN the preparation of this work I did not confine myself to the life of Aaron Burr as written either by Davis or Parton. Both are unjust to him—Parton least so. But even he, while writing with an evident desire to do justice, approaches the subject with a degree of timid hesitation, which proves that he dreaded to encounter the tide of undeserved reprobation which is yet beating against the tomb of the illustrious dead. The work of Matthew L. Davis is a libel upon the man he professed to honor, and whom he called his friend in life. I went beyond these, and collected many old pamphlets and documents relating to Burr and Hamilton, and endeavored to extract from them enough of the truth to enable me to form a just estimate of the characters of both. That estimate once formed, the book was made to correspond with it, the main historical facts alone being preserved, while all the rest is the offspring of imagination.

The history of the war proves conclusively that there was no better soldier, no more devoted patriot in the long list of Revolutionary heroes

than Aaron Burr; and all contemporary testimony agrees that no man ever lived of a more genial, hospitable, and kindly nature. Yet this man, unsurpassed as a soldier, unrivalled as a lawyer, pure, upright, and untarnished as a statesman, became, from the force of circumstances, the object of the bitterest calumnies that malice could invent or the blindest prejudice believe. Persecution dogged him to his grave; and although the life of a generation has passed away since then, justice still hesitates to approach the spot where the bones of the patriot soldier repose. Under the garb of fiction, I have endeavored to contribute my mite toward relieving his memory from the unjust aspersions which imbittered his life. If I accomplish nothing more than to induce a portion of the rising generation to search the records of that life, I shall be amply repaid for the labor it has cost.

Of Alexander Hamilton I have written nothing of which I do not believe he was capable, after the fullest examination of his own writings and those of others. That I have entertained strong prejudices against him from boyhood, is true; that those prejudices may have influenced my judgment, is possible; but I tried to discard them, and look at his character in the light of reason alone. The more I studied it, the more I became convinced that the world never presented such a combination of greatness and meanness, of daring courage and of vile malignity, of high aspirations and of low hypocrisy. Shrewd, artful, and unscrupulous, there were no means he would

not employ to accomplish his ends — no tool too base to be used when its services were needful. Loose in his own morals, even to licentiousness, he criticised those of Thomas Jefferson with a severity no other antagonist ever equaled. Slander was his favorite weapon, and no one stood in his way who did not feel the venom of his tongue and pen.

All that part of the work now submitted to the public, which is not history, is based upon these views of the characters of the principal actors, and wherever I have trusted to imagination, its flight has been restrained within the boundaries of what I believed each to be capable.

The causes which led me to write this book, and the objects I have in view, other than those stated, are of no concern to the public. It has been composed, for the most part, in the midst of many and pressing engagements, and the last part of it was not even read over before it was sent to the publishers; but I ask no charity on that account. The critic is at full liberty to exhaust his powers of satire upon it; and so far from being offended at the freedom of his strictures, I will thank him for pointing out defects which I may thus learn to amend in future.

It is my purpose to continue the story of Aaron Burr, from the time of his duel with Hamilton to that of his death. The last days of that remarkable man, it seems to me, present a better field for romance than his earlier career. At all events, it is one that is yet untrodden, and therefore possesses an interest in itself which may

cause the reader to overlook any deficiency of plot or any faults of style that would otherwise challenge his criticisms. THE AUTHOR.

The last paragraph of "The Rivals" reads as follows: "Reader, the story of 'The Rivals' is at an end. If it meets with your favor, before long another will follow it, recording the after history of that remarkable man, whose whole life was blackened by calumny and imbittered by persecution, and around whose grave still linger the harpies whose presence is pollution and whose touch is corruption."

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“LITTLE BURR”

THE WARWICK OF AMERICA

A Tale of the Old Revolutionary Days

CHAPTER I

AARON AND ABE

THE sun was setting, as it had done thousands of times before, at the close of a beautiful day in June; the time, 1775; the place, the town of Litchfield, Connecticut.

The month was the one most fragrant with the perfume of flowers, which scented the balmy breeze; the time, one pregnant with the possibilities of great events in the life of the nation; the town, an old one, since hallowed by historical associations.

The Scriptures fix the allotted life of man at three-score and ten years; by many, perhaps the majority of human beings, it is considered too short, and they yearn for the days of Methuselah.

Think of the possibilities contained within a single year! Born amid the snowstorms and tempestuous weather of January, it sturdily withstands their recurrence in February and March; its passes its days of childhood in April and May; June sees it in its youthful prime, when its physical beauties are at their height; it arrives at a noble and lusty manhood in July and August; the fruition of its life is shown in September, and

is garnered in October; in November it experiences a premonition of its ultimate doom, for it loses strength and ambition, and the storms which blow upon it are met with but feeble resistance; in December it yields to the scythe of old Father Time, who has mowed down the thousands of years before it. Hardly has it expired, before its successor, the new-born year, is warmly welcomed. Seventy of these periods of birth, and growth, and beauty, and fruition, and logical and natural death are allotted to us! How can any one think that the time is short? It is not the number of years that we live, but what we do in those years, which gives us a name and fame here, and will stand to our credit in the hereafter.

The year 1775 was destined to become the Year of Years; into it were to be crowded so many important events, it is no wonder that many which had preceded it shrank back, ashamed of their own small doings. During that year the fire which had been ignited in the breasts of an indignant people by the oppressions instigated and enforced by an unjust government was to be fanned into a flame which all the wealth of England and the combined strength of its army and navy would be powerless to quench!

Such times as these thrill men's souls; they develop the noblest traits—the better parts of man; they lead to great exploits and deeds of daring bravery; they develop the latent faith and trust in God, for no civilized nation ever went into a war without invoking the aid of the Divine Power; they bring out the sympathy, sublime

faithfulness, and patient heroism of loving women, who, obliged to wait at home while their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons are on the battlefield, sit in silence, with hope and prayer in their hearts. It is of such times and of such men and women, that this romance tells.

None of the houses in old Litchfield were pretentious; all, however, were commodious and comfortable. In the porch of one of them sat a young man and woman, evidently man and wife. Both were young—the woman, apparently about twenty-one, the man, a few years her senior.

The community was rural and nearly every one of the residents was engaged in farming as a means of procuring a livelihood; but Tappan Reeve, who sat in the porch that pleasant summer evening with his wife, Sarah, was not a farmer in the full acceptation of the word. To be sure, he owned a farm, but the seeds were sown, the grass mowed, and the crops gathered by hired help.

He was, by profession, a lawyer, and plenty of business had come to his hands; for in those days, although the greater part of the spare time of both men and women was given to the discussion of religious matters, a certain portion was occupied for the settlement of personal disputes.

Connecticut, by the demands of political and, as it may be termed, religious law, had won the title of "The Land of Steady Habits." These laws were so severe in every particular and were so rigorously enforced, that many good men and women, as well as those who sinned intentionally, came under the ban and were haled before the

judge for examination and sentence. This condition of affairs supplied many opportunities for the lawyer to offer his professional services.

Lawyer Reeve had just finished reading aloud from a book. It was a volume of sermons preached by the Rev. Jonathan Edwards in years gone by. Those sermons had a peculiar interest for Sarah Reeve, for they had fallen from the inspired lips of her grandfather. She had read them over and over again, but they seemed to gather new force and power when read by her husband, whose tones were firm and sonorous.

She could not remember her grandfather, for he had died when she was very young; so, too, had died both her father and mother — the latter, the loveliest, so they all had told her, of her grandfather's daughters. In an old chest, upstairs, was a sacred heirloom: it was a brocaded silk dress that her mother had worn. She had determined many times to have it cut over and made to fit herself, but when the deed became imminent it seemed sacrilegious, and was abandoned, temporarily, at least.

"Your grandfather was a great theologian, Sarah," remarked Mr. Reeve.

"Yes, and they tell me," his wife replied, "that, although grandmother Edwards did not preach, yet she was inspired to even a higher degree than was grandfather. I have also been told that when in this state of religious beatitude, it seemed to her hearers as though she were lifted from earth. I remember when I was last at Stockbridge, that an old lady who had known her said to me, that it

seemed as though the angels from Heaven had laid hands upon her and were striving to take her away with them, but she loved her husband and her family of ten children and resisted their appeals."

"It has always seemed strange to me," said Mr. Reeve, "that your brother didn't elect to become a preacher, as had his grandfather and father."

"He would have," Mrs. Reeve quickly replied, "had not the hand of death taken both our parents away when we were so young. If they had lived and could have attended to Aaron's education, I have no doubt he would have followed in the holy footsteps of his ancestors; but, you know, grandfather, and father, and mother, all died within the period of a year and a half, and we two little orphan children were sent to live with Uncle Timothy."

Mr. Reeve laughed, quietly. "Yes, Aaron has told me some of his experiences with Uncle Timothy; I judge he had a hard creed, a hard voice, and a hard hand."

"I didn't notice it so much," said his wife; "but you know Aaron is proud and high-spirited. He would have listened patiently to reproof and advice, but it stung him to the quick when he was given a blow. I often feel afraid that it was those blows given by Uncle Timothy which have driven from his heart the love of God and reverence for His teachings that he ought certainly to have inherited."

Their interchange of thought was suddenly

interrupted and, in fact, brought to an abrupt close, by the appearance at the doorway of the subject of their conversation. The Aaron to whom they had referred was a young man about nineteen years of age, short in stature and slight in build; he was graceful in motion and manner, handsome in face and form. His cheeks were flushed with the hue of health, while his dark eyes were both brilliant and piercing.

"At your devotions, Sally?" he asked, playfully, as he stepped between them, and then, turning, faced his sister and brother-in-law.

"I'll wager," said she, "that you have not been so well employed."

"And I'll wager," added his brother-in-law, "that you have not looked at your law books today. Like Mr. Bellamy, who deemed you incorrigible as a theological student, I am afraid I shall be obliged to come to the same opinion concerning your law studies."

"You are both right," said the young man; "I have been reading all day and now feel the need of some physical exercise; but I assure you, upon my honor, that I have not given a minute of the day to either theology or law."

"If you have not been looking out for the future of your immortal soul, or learning the profession which is to supply you with a livelihood in the future, what have you been doing?" asked his sister, in a somewhat severe tone of voice, while she looked earnestly into her brother's face.

"I have been studying the science of war," he replied, proudly. As he spoke he drew himself up

to his full stature, and probably, at the moment, imagined himself attired in a soldier's uniform, with either a musket upon his shoulder or a sword in his hand.

"There are men enough, older than you, to do the fighting when the time comes," remarked his brother-in-law.

"No man is too young who can shoulder a musket or wield a sword," was the reply. Then the young man added: "I am sure I can do both."

"Let us hope," said his sister, "that the differences between the Colonies and England will be satisfactorily adjusted, and our men and women left free once more, to till the soil, weave and spin, and love and serve God."

"That will never be," said the young man, bitterly; "the king and his ministers have gone too far. They have invaded our most sacred rights as men; they have insulted our most cherished feelings of personal liberty; they have been deaf to the advice of their own people and the remonstrances of ours; they have dug a deep pit, into which they must ultimately fall. As for myself, I am ready to help put them into it."

Feeling, doubtless, that if he said more upon the subject he might grieve his sister, whom he dearly loved, he turned quickly, and going through the garden, which was redolent with the perfume of old-time flowers and herbs, soon reached the road and walked in the direction of the most thickly settled part of the town, commonly referred to as the "village."

As he rounded a bend in the road, he came suddenly upon a sturdy, heavily-built country youth, who was seated upon a stone wall, holding in his hand a stout oaken stick, which he waved lazily to and fro.

Young Aaron's clothes were of fine material, well cut and made, and fitted him to perfection. Those of the country youth were of coarse material, slouchy and baggy in appearance, and had evidently experienced a season, or many seasons, of long and arduous wear. His hair was light and curly. A smile broke over his good-natured face as Aaron approached him, and the look of honest welcome in his bright blue eyes showed that their difference in social station, so far as they were concerned, at least, was no bar to their mutual friendship.

"Hello, Aaron!" cried the young countryman, as he leaped from the wall and extended a hand, which was warmly grasped by the other; "I've been wonderin' whether you was goin' down town to-night; thought I'd wait for you awhile, anyway."

"I am glad you did," said Aaron. "I am always glad to see you. You know that, Abe."

Abe, or Abiel Budlong, for that was his full name, blushed, as a young girl might have done, when he heard these words; but his blush was due to the pleasure which the words gave him, and not to any feeling of bashfulness, as might have been the case with a demure and discreet young maiden.

To many inhabitants of Litchfield, the strong

friendship existing between Aaron and Abe seemed somewhat strange, considering the circumstances. Aaron sprang from an ancestry noted for its advanced education, high social refinement, and, considering the possessions of others, great wealth.

Abe was a son of the soil. His parents and grandparents had been farmers and had derived a meagre living from the somewhat reluctant soil. They had possessed no aspirations for greater fame and fortune than fall to the honest farmer, and consequently Abe had inherited no such aspirations. His life had not tended to make him dissatisfied with his lot or lead him to yearn for a wider and possibly nobler future. In one respect only had he departed from the traditions of the past. His people had been satisfied with the company of the boys and girls, the youth of both sexes, and the men and women of their own station in life; but since Abe had become acquainted with Aaron, he had dropped nearly all of his old country associates and associations, and looked forward, during his day of toil, to the evening, when he should be able to meet his friend Aaron, and walk and talk with him.

Like the positive and negative poles of the magnet, these opposite ends were drawn together. The honest nature, smiling face, and ever-willing service of Abe attracted Aaron, while Aaron's gentle manner, choice language, and unvarying courtesy—in which there was never any semblance of the superior talking to an inferior—won over and fascinated Abe. If anything was

said against Aaron by any one in the village, Abe became at once a stout defender.

One evening the loungers about the general store in the village had been talking politics, when a chance remark turned the conversation to the subject of education. One of the loungers said:

"I s'pose Tappan Reeve's brother-in-law thinks he has the best eddication of anybody in Litchfield, not exceptin' the parson."

"You've no right," said Abe, "to say what Aaron thinks; you can think what you think yourself, and say it, but you've no business to say what you think any other person thinks and try and make 'em believe you're right. Now, I ain't eddicated, but I've heerd enough to know that eddication is a mighty good thing to have, and 'twould be a good deal better if more'n us had more'n we've got."

The young man to whom these words had been addressed, retorted, somewhat sharply:

"What do you know about eddication, anyway?"

"I know this," Abe replied, "that larnin', to an eddicated man, is like a rifle in the hands of a good soldier; both on 'em hit the mark ev'ry time."

"Are you goin' down to the village, Aaron?" asked Abe, after the two young men had walked along, side by side, a short distance.

"Not down to the store, if that is what you mean," Aaron replied. "I prefer your company to that of the lazy fellows who lounge about there."



News of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Aaron and Abe.

“The war has begun,” he cried, in a husky voice. *Page 11.*

We will turn to the left and come back into the main road beyond the store, if you are willing. I have been reading books on the science of war all day long, and I will tell you a few things that I have learned, if you would like to hear them."

"I s'pose that fightin' has rules, as well as any other business?" remarked Abe. "From what folks say, an' what we read in the papers, we are likely to have some trouble with the redcoats afore long. If we larn how to fight 'em, it might be of some sarvice to us sooner'n we think."

"It is for such an exigency that I am getting ready," said Aaron, sententiously.

They walked on, Aaron talking, and Abe listening with evident interest, until they once more reached the main road beyond the village store. Still they walked on, Aaron intent upon devising plans for the proper attacking of the enemy's breastworks, when their attention was attracted by the sound of hoofs.

"Somebody must be in a mighty hurry," said Abe.

Somebody was in a hurry, for the horseman who soon came into sight was covered with dust and the foam was dripping from the mouth of his steed, which had evidently been urged forward at his utmost speed and had now nearly reached the limit of his endurance. The rider drew rein suddenly, as he reached the young men.

"The war has begun!" he cried in a husky voice. "There has been a fight near Boston; our men built a fort on Bunker's Hill and the British came over to take it. They were driven back,

time after time, and thousands of them killed and wounded."

"And our loss?" cried Aaron, in a sharp, nervous tone.

"We lost pretty heavy, too. Gin'ral Warren was killed, and lots of our best men; the British called it a drawn battle, but our gin'rals say we got the best of it. I can't stop any longer," he cried, "I'm goin' to git another horse and keep on and spread the news." He put spurs to his horse and was off to the village to carry the tidings to the loungers at the store.

The two young men walked along for some distance, but neither of them spoke. Finally, Abe said:

"I guess both on us are thinkin' the same thing and sayin' nothin'."

"The time for talking is past," said Aaron. "Now is the time for action. There is but one thing to be done, and that must be done. All those who love their country must go to Boston at once and join the patriot forces."

"I'm with yer!" cried Abe. "What time will you be up to-morrow mornin', Aaron?"

"By four o'clock," was the reply.

"I'll be sure," said Abe. "I'll bring little Jimmy Latham, who knows how to drum. I kin blow the fife some myself." Then he laughed loudly. "I kin see us now," said he; "Aaron Burr—that's you—walkin' ahead to enlist recruits, while Jimmy and I come behind with a drum and fife ter wake up the sleepy folks and tell 'em it's time for 'em ter grab their muskets an' powder horns an' go to jine Gin'ral Washin'ton."

The two young men faced each other and clasped hands; then and there was formed a tie of friendship which was to remain unbroken through the years of peril and privation and suffering that were to follow.

CHAPTER II

RAW RECRUITS

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO! The cock-a-doodle-doo given as a sonorous chant by the bright-plumaged sovereign of the henyard at the rear of the Reeve homestead, was not necessary to awaken Aaron the morning after the receipt of the news of the battle of Bunker's Hill.

When the first faint streaks of morning light showed themselves in the East, he jumped from his bed, and quickly dressing, seated himself at the table upon which were arranged his collection of law and military books.

He was as familiar with the heroic deeds of Leonidas, Xerxes, and the great Cyrus, as with the letters of the alphabet. The campaigns of Hannibal, Julius Cæsar, and Alexander the Great were no deeper mysteries to him than were the simplest propositions in Euclid.

So deeply was young Burr immersed in the review of his military studies, that his sister Sarah, after calling him several times in vain, ascended the stairs and opening the door of his room, said, rather sharply:

"Can't you leave your books long enough, Aaron, to come to breakfast?"

"Why certainly, Sally," cried he, springing to his feet and chasing away from her face the slight

signs of vexation which had showed there, by giving her a brotherly embrace and a good-morning kiss.

"Excuse me, my dear, good sister, but you have heard the great news from Boston?"

"Yes," said Sarah; "Tappan has been talking with some of our neighbors and they told him about the battle."

"I learned of it last evening, but you were both abed when I got home and I thought the good news would keep until morning." The words, "good news" fell from his lips as he and his sister reached the foot of the stairs and entered the kitchen, where they found Mr. Reeve already seated at the breakfast table.

"What do you mean by good news?" asked he. "Do you refer to that bloody affair at Charlestown? I do not call it good news. The result will be to make it so much harder on our part to secure concessions from the Crown, and to pacify the Colonies."

"There will be no concessions asked for from the Crown," said young Burr, as he seated himself at the table. "Neither will the Colonies allow themselves to be pacified. This is to be war to the bitter end."

"Yes," said Mr. Reeve, "and God only knows how bitter it will be for all of us — friend against friend, brother against brother — and for what?"

"For what?" cried Aaron. "For the noblest of all purposes — to show that the personal rights of man are a divine gift, and not a begrudged gift from an earthly ruler."

"No doubt you feel what you say, Aaron," said Mr. Reeve, "but we cannot settle the coming contest at the breakfast table, at least not on an empty stomach; so I will implore the divine blessing upon our distracted country. We will eat, in order that we may properly perform the duties of the day."

Sarah had not spoken during the conversation between her husband and brother, but had gazed fixedly at the face of the latter. His cheeks were flushed and there was a light in his always luminous eyes different from any she had ever seen there before. What did it portend? Did he mean to go to the war? She knew him too well to ask the question directly. No, she would wait. Whatever project he might be considering would surely come to a head by another day, when he would speak of it of his own accord.

Aaron ate but little. His ear had caught a sound which had escaped the attention of the others, who were more intent upon enjoying their morning meal. Young Burr looked at the clock. It was the hour of four. June is a month in which the grass must be mown and the hay-lofts filled. Mr. Reeve had engaged several farm hands to help him, and this day's work was to close up the season.

The sounds which had attracted Aaron's attention were the piercing notes of a fife and the tap, tap, tap of a drum. Abe Budlong and little Jimmy Latham were on time, to the minute. Aaron sprang to his feet, and saying, "I shall not be home to dinner," ran from the room and sped quickly

towards the point from which came the martial sounds.

“‘There shall be wars and rumors of wars,’” said Mr. Reeve.

“Yes,” fell from his wife’s lips. Then she added: “And many a home shall lose its first-born and its pride.”

When Aaron reached the road, he found Abe and Jimmy waiting for him, as he had expected. “We’re on time,” said Abe; “I had hard work to rout Jimmy out of bed, and besides, I had to stop and help him feed the pigs. Old Job Latham is sound at heart and when I told him what we wanted Jimmy for, he said he might go and drum for us all day if we needed him. So, Sergeant Burr, your army is waitin’ for your orders.”

Burr could not help smiling at Abe’s grandiloquent reference to the assembled host. “Come along, then,” said he, “and make all the noise you can.”

The nucleus of Old Litchfield’s war quota marched on over the dusty road. As they advanced, the sharp notes of the fife and the roll of the drum caused the doors to be opened, from which eager faces looked out. Windows were thrown up, and women and children surveyed the little company with wondering eyes. At intervals, young Burr called out in a loud tone of voice:

“The war has begun! Shoulder your muskets and fight for your native land.”

Burr and his companions soon reached the village smithy. Abraham Starkweather was up

betimes, as were also his son Jonathan and his hired man Solomon Priestly. Abraham had donned his leathern apron; Jonathan had started the fire in the forge, while Solomon was gathering the pieces of iron which were to be subjected to its intense heat. The anvil had not yet begun to ring with Abraham's sturdy blows and for that reason he heard the sound of the fife and drum and stepped to the door of the smithy, as Burr and his musicians approached it.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Abraham; his fat, round sides shook, as did also his fat, round cheeks. "Oho! my boys," he cried, with a tone almost as loud as a bellow from Markham's bull. "So our young soldier is off to the war! Well, it was a good idea, Aaron, to enlist your band first, for sojerin' is poor work without good music. I had my fill of fighting Injuns when I was about your age."

"Then you're just the man we want now," said young Burr. "We need all the men who know how to fight, not only to help do the fighting, but to show our raw recruits what they should do."

"You must be joking," said Abraham. He laughed again, but this time not so loudly nor so long.

"I am not joking, good Mr. Starkweather," said Aaron. "We have borne and forborne; we have couched requests in polite language, and they have been refused; we have demanded our rights, and we have been laughed at; blood has flowed at Bunker's Hill and the flow will never stop until this country is free to choose its own rulers."

"Well spoken, lad!" cried Abraham. "If I were a young man, you would not have to ask me twice to follow you."

"Well," said his son Jonathan, stepping forward, "I'm a young man and Aaron won't have to ask me but once. May I go, father?" and the son looked up into the old man's face with an expression full of eager inquiry.

A shade fell across the face of Abraham Starkweather. He was a widower; his wife had been dead for three years. He had not married again, nor even thought of it, but had engaged the Widow Whittaker to look after his household. He knew that the widow, in the language of the day, was "settin' her cap for him." Quick as lightning the thought ran through his mind that, if Jonathan went to the war, he would be left at the widow's mercy. As this idea occurred to him, he broke into a loud roar of laughter, which, under the circumstances, was understood neither by Aaron nor by Jonathan. Suddenly the father turned to his son and said:

"Yes, Jonathan, you may go to the war; but there is a condition tacked onto it, which is"—he stopped, and none of his hearers could divine what his next words were to be. "The condition is," he continued, speaking very slowly, "that I go with you."

"I knew," cried Burr, "that you were a good man and true."

Abe Budlong patted little Jimmy Latham on the back and then whispered in his ear:

"We've two recruits, Jimmy, and it was the fife and drum that did it."

"I suppose, Mr. Starkweather," said Solomon Priestly, "that if you both go to war, I shall have to stay at home and run the smithy."

Abe Budlong, who, up to this time, had felt that military decorum required that he should keep silent while Sergeant Burr did the talking, could not restrain himself upon hearing these words. "You've a mighty good opinion of yer-self," said he, addressing Solomon, "to think that you can carry on the business alone. I s'pose you'll get the Widder Whittaker to come out and do the poundin', while you hold the tongs, for I don't think you're up to any part of the business but that."

"That's right!" cried Abraham. "Give it to him, Abel! I never knew why he was named Solomon before, but I see now that it is because he is wiser than his generation."

"Solomon is only joking," said Burr. "He means to come with us."

"No I don't!" was the reply. "I'm not afraid to fight and I'm not afraid to speak my mind. If you want to know it, I'm a king's man and I don't propose to put my neck into a halter by taking up arms against the lawful government of this country."

"Well, if them's your opinions," cried Abraham Starkweather, "you can not only take up your arms, but you can pack up your duds and find another job as quick as you can. No more of my money shall go into a king's man's pocket. Rake out the fire, Jonathan."

The young man sprang with alacrity to do as

he was bidden, and the old man took off his leathern apron and threw it on the anvil. "Perhaps that'll rot before I get back," he said, "but if it does, I'll tan some Britisher's hide and make another one." Evidently, the war feeling and the bitterness which it engenders were rising fast in the old man's heart.

"I'll go and get the muskets, Jonathan, while you lock up the smithy. The only way that we can show our neighbors that we mean what we say, is to shoulder our muskets and join Captain Burr's army."

Five minutes later, the little company, now numbering five, disappeared from sight at a turn in the road. Solomon Priestley watched them while they were visible and then entered the house to tell the Widow Whittaker that he had lost his job and that she, too, would soon find herself out of a place.

Once more the shrill tones of Abe Budlong's fife cut the air and little Jimmy Latham gave a longer and louder roll upon the drum. The cobbler shop was the next point of attack. Obed Armitage, the village shoemaker, came to the door, holding his hand over his eyes to screen them from the light of the sun, the rays of which caused his bald head to shine like a looking-glass.

"What's up," he cried, "that ye're out makin' sech a caterwaulin' noise so airy in the mornin'?"

It took Burr but a short time to tell the old story over again. "You must come along, Obed," he said. "We shall want some shoes, and we know that there is not a better man in America to make them than you."

"Ef I didn't know," said the cobbler, "that you wuz a Jersey man, I should think ye came from Ireland, ye're so full of blarney."

Then Abe spoke: "Well, yer know, Obed, that your mother came from Ireland, and that's the reason yer know good blarney when yer hear it."

"Are ye both goin'?" asked Obed, turning to Starkweather and his son.

"You're right, we are!" said Jonathan.

"Well, I'm wid ye!" cried Obed, and going to a closet he brought out an old musket and powder-horn, and to the music of the fife and drum the rapidly increasing army marched on. But half an hour had passed away and its numbers were already doubled.

By this time they had reached what was known as the "village," and only a few hundred feet farther on was the general store. It was too early for the morning loungers to congregate, but the keeper of the store, when he heard the martial strains, stepped to the door to view the oncoming army.

"Here'll be a job for you, Johnson," said he, turning to the village tailor, who had come to the store to buy some thread and needles. "Young Burr is going to war, and the Litchfield boys will have to have some uniforms."

"Hello, Johnson!" cried Abraham Starkweather, as he espied the village tailor. "You're just the man we want. Long marches and hard fighting will soon wear out our clothes and we shall need a tailor more'n a doctor."

"Where be ye bound?" asked Johnson, as he advanced and stood next to Abraham.

"We're going to Boston," was the reply, "to give Gen'ral Washington what little help we can. I've heard you talk war and what you'd do to the Britishers, if you had the chance, Tim Johnson, for the past two years; and now is the time for you to make your words good. If you'll allow me, Captain Burr, I'll go back to Johnson's shop with him, so that he can get his gun. He's said too much to go back on it now."

"I'm not goin' back on it," said Johnson; "I know I said that if there was another man in Litchfield that would fight the Britishers, there'd be two of us, and I'll make my word good."

With a new recruit, the augmented army marched to new conquests. As they neared the parsonage, Abraham said:

"You'd better let me go in and talk to Parson Morrison; you see, I'm a deacon in his church, and what I say will have more weight with him than if one of you onbelievers went in;" and he laughed loudly at his own wit. He spoke the truth, however, for he was the only church-going man so far enlisted in the company.

Parson David Morrison was a man of about fifty, but he looked to be much older. His hair was white and his face deeply furrowed with wrinkles, those unmistakable signs, not, necessarily, of advanced years, but of the accumulation of sorrows and troubles, which age a man faster than time alone can do the work.

"What means this martial array?" asked Parson Morrison, as Abraham Starkweather strode up to the table at which the clergyman sat writing,

and brought down his musket with a loud thump upon the floor.

"It means, Parson," cried Abraham, "that the Day of Judgment has come. I don't mean the day when God will judge the world, but the day on which the patriots have decided that we love our country more than we do our king, and we propose to seize the country and throw the king overboard."

"I have hoped," cried the clergyman, rising to his feet, while the gleam in his eye showed that he was electrified by the defiant words just spoken,— "I have hoped," he repeated, "that this day would come and come soon; no man can serve his God well who is the slave of an earthly monarch. The sinner crushed down by the demands of the Devil is not in so bad a condition as the people of this land; but we will never submit, cravenly, to the oppression of our British rulers."

"It does my heart good to hear you talk," cried Abraham. "If you'll come with us, you'll gain for us a dozen recruits before the sun goes down."

"Come with you?" cried the parson. "Even as the disciple said to our Lord, say I—I will leave all and follow thee." He grasped the Bible, which lay upon the table, with one hand and his hickory cane with the other. "This is my weapon!" said he, holding the Bible aloft. "I shall carry neither gun nor sword; when those weapons have done their work, I will kneel by the dying with this book in my hand, and pray that God may take the souls of all brave men who die for their country to Himself in Heaven." Filled with enthusiasm, the



The Raw Recruits. The Parson leading.

“Then on they marched; the old clergyman clasping the Bible in his hand.”

old parson strode forth from the room, followed by Abraham.

"He's coming with us," the latter cried, as they reached the road, and the little army gave three loud cheers for the parson militant. Then on they marched; the old clergyman clasping the Bible tightly in his hand, while the cool morning breeze played gently with the long white hair which hung down over his shoulders.

"Shall we stop at Seth Calkins's?" whispered Abe to Aaron. "You know Mary, his wife, has no one to depend upon but him, and then there's little Phœbe, only six years old."

"We don't say that they must go to war," was Aaron's reply; "it is for them to say whether they will go."

As they approached the house, Aaron espied pretty Mrs. Calkins milking a cow. "You stay here, boys," he cried. "I'll go and have a little talk with Mistress Calkins."

"What sort of a celebration is this, Master Burr?" was her inquiry, as he approached her.

"The time for celebration has not yet come, Mistress Calkins. When we whip the British and have driven them from the land, then we will have a celebration such as no country has ever thought of before. When the time comes, we shall ring bells and fire cannons. The flag of our country, which will be the symbol of liberty, will float from every flag-pole, and the day will be one of feasting and rejoicing for centuries to come."

"You seem to be both a soldier and a prophet," said Mistress Calkins. "I heard about the battle

last night; Joseph was down to the store when the messenger galloped up. He says he is going, and I have only one regret — I wish that I could go with him.”

“How will you manage,” asked Aaron, “to get along, if you are left alone with little Phœbe?”

“If my husband” — and the young wife’s face flushed with pride — “is brave enough to take his musket and go to fight our foes, I am sure his wife is brave enough to stay at home, where she is free from all danger.”

“Bravely spoken, Mistress Calkins!” cried Parson Morrison, who had come up, unobserved, behind Aaron, and had overheard her last words.

“Our old men and our young men shall go forth to fight,” said the parson, and for the time he seemed to think that he was in his pulpit, preaching to his congregation. “The old women and the young women shall stay at home. To them is given the sacred and the holy duty to look out for the home, and to keep it, until the father, or the husband, or the son returns as a victor, or is brought home dead upon his shield.”

The clergyman’s words, delivered in an impassioned and loud tone of voice, were heard by the remainder of the company, and impelled by an interest and curiosity they could not restrain, they came forward and, standing with bared heads, listened to him.

“If this land is to be made free, and I believe it is God’s will that it should be,” the old man went on, “the battles will be fought not only by the men in the field, but by the women at home.

They will have to do as much of the hard work as they can, and leave the rest undone. Neither the law nor God expects any one to perform impossibilities. It will be their sacred duty to look after the old folks and nurse the sick; they will have to make clothing for the use of the army, and pick lint and make bandages to bind up the wounds of those who fall by the way."

He stopped, clasped his white, withered hands, closed his eyes, and seemed to be engaged in silent prayer. All stood with bowed heads and waited for his next words.

"Where is your husband, Mistress Calkins?" he asked.

"He has gone to old man Latham's, little Jimmy's grandfather; you know he is too old to fight, but Joseph says he has a fine musket, which, no doubt, he will sell, and he has gone over to buy it. If you don't meet him, I can tell him which way you have gone, and it will not take him long to catch up with you."

"It is such mothers as you, Mistress Calkins," cried the preacher, "who give birth to brave sons."

"I have no sons," said she, "but, good Pastor Morrison, if the worst comes—that is, I mean, if Joseph falls—if they will let me, I will shoulder his gun and take his place." This brave speech from a heroic woman, who was but a type of the tens of thousands like herself, who lived in the old revolutionary days, was greeted with loud huzzas.

Aaron Burr did not return home to dinner that day, nor did he sit down to the evening meal. The dishes were washed and put away when he entered the house, travel-stained and weary.

"Where have you been, Aaron?" asked his sister, as she ran forward and threw her arms about his neck. Then she kissed him impulsively. He loved his sister devotedly, and drawing her head down to his shoulder, he kissed her upon the forehead.

"I have been busy all day, Sally, drumming up raw recruits for the patriot army."

"And how have you succeeded?" asked his brother-in-law, who had entered the room and had overheard his words.

"Counting Jimmy Latham, who is going as a drummer boy, and myself," said young Burr, "we number twenty-eight."

"What do you say, Aaron?" cried his sister. "You going to war? I will not allow it! I will send word at once to Uncle Timothy. Since father and mother died he is our guardian, and has taken the place of both our parents. I know that he will forbid your doing so rash a thing."

"When our country is in peril, it has claims upon us which are greater than those of father and mother, sister and brother," said Aaron, proudly; and there was a look in his face which indicated that any command from his guardian would meet with a like response.

"But what becomes of your law studies?" asked his brother-in-law, somewhat petulantly.

"There are plenty left to interpret the old laws, while we go to determine who shall have the right to make the new laws for us," was the reply. "I have eaten nothing since morning," he added, "and have had nothing to drink but a glass of

milk. I am almost famished. We shall gather at the store to-morrow at six o'clock, and at seven we shall start on our march to Boston."

There is no cry that appeals so strongly to the good-hearted, good-tempered housewife, as that for food and drink, and it took Sarah Reeve but a short time to place upon the table a liberal supply of both. Aaron was very abstemious as regarded food, but as he had eaten nothing all day, his sister looked on with something like an expression of wonderment at the great increase in his appetite. "You know, Sally," he said, with a laugh, "this may be the last good meal that I shall have for many a day. How I shall miss your cooking when I have to live on stringy beef and butterless bread." He might not have spoken with so much freedom, if it had not been for the fact that his brother-in-law had gone back into the sitting-room, and having snuffed a candle, had sat down to read the report of a law case in which he was greatly interested.

"I cannot keep you from going to war, Aaron," said his sister, smiling through the tears which filled her eyes, "but I give you my word I shall write to Uncle Timothy to-night, and I have no doubt that you will come back to Litchfield a great deal quicker than you will go away."

Aaron arose, having finished his meal, and turning to his sister, said:

"Write to him, by all means, Sally; tell him just what I am going to do; tell him that my country needs my services. It shall have them, and, if God wills it, my life. And just say at the

end of your letter, good sister Sally, that if he sends anybody to Boston to bring me back, that I will have him shot down as quickly as I would if he were a Britisher." With these parting words of defiance, he took his candle from the mantel-piece, lighted it, and went upstairs to his own room.

CHAPTER III

THROUGH THE WILDS

THE march from Litchfield to Cambridge was a long and tedious one. The little band of patriots struggled manfully on, endeavoring to cover as much ground each day as they could, for they knew not when the next blow would be struck by the British. Parson Morrison daily admonished them that their little company, battling for truth and right, was more than equal to a hundred hirelings, fighting for their day's pay and a glass of grog.

Abe Budlong's lips became swollen from their almost constant application to the mouthpiece of the fife, and little Jimmy Latham's arms ached when night came, and he was no longer called upon to mark time for the recruits. When, possibly, they stopped over night in some town, after supper Parson Morrison gathered a crowd about him before the village store and painted in vivid colors the duty of every man to throw down the hammer, the saw, the shovel, and the hoe, and, instead of wielding these implements of honest industry, take his musket or rifle and go forth to fight the common enemy.

During these patriotic appeals, the old man appeared to be transfigured; his voice, naturally strong, seemed to gather additional volume and

resonance. He had been a close and earnest student of the Bible, and the stories of wars, as told therein, came in the words of Holy Writ to his lips. He pictured America as the Promised Land, destined to afford a haven for the unhappy and oppressed of all nations.

“It is our duty,” he cried, “to rescue this fair land from the hands of the King and his ministers, who would enslave us and keep this great country in a state of political debasement and industrial tutelage. The King of England and his ministers look upon the Colonies as if they were an orchard. We, their minions, have prepared the soil, planted the trees, driven away destructive birds and insects — and now the fruit of the orchard is ready for picking. ‘Now,’ say the ministers, ‘is the time for us to reap the advantage of all this work done by our minions; they have no representation in Parliament and cannot resist. We will tax them. We will tax them so much that, after we have collected our tithes, there will remain only enough to give them an humble living, until it is time to prepare the orchard for another year of plenty.’ But I warn you, if you give them their tithes once, you will be forced to pay them forever! Refuse to pay them! Resist as long as there is a man to fire a musket or wield a sword!”

In some places the parson’s oratory fell upon deaf ears, and few recruits were joined to their number; but in other towns the effect of his words was magnetic, and they literally obeyed his command to throw down their tools and grasp their weapons.

When the little army reached Cambridge under Burr's command, for the position of leader had been assumed by him and retained without objection, the number of recruits had swelled from twenty-eight to one hundred and thirty.

They presented a motley appearance when they entered the camp at Cambridge, and Burr reported their arrival to the commanding general. They were without uniforms; there was really nothing to distinguish them from a body of private citizens, except the presence of the rifle or musket, bullet pouch, and powder horn. But, although the uniform adds to the martial appearance of soldiers and prevents friend from firing upon friend during the progress of battle, it is, after all, the man behind the gun, and the spirit which animates him, that wins the battle.

Burr had not expected to bring trained soldiers with him to join the patriot army, but he had anticipated that when he arrived at Cambridge he would find soldiers in uniform, either well drilled, or giving all their available time to the study of military tactics. In this he was grievously disappointed. He found that the entire army was in the same condition as the company which he had brought with him. Burr was a disciplinarian; his uncle Timothy had taught him that punishment was sure to follow a failure to render exact and prompt obedience; his experience at college had proven to him that education was but a preparation for the great campaign—the battle of life. In this battle of life he felt convinced that to succeed, it was necessary to block out a course

of action and to adhere strictly to it, proceeding systematically against all opponents, as a general would do when attacking an enemy. He felt that the poorly-armed and drilled militia could make but a feeble resistance to King George's regulars in the open field. They could hold their own from behind trees, stone walls, houses, and breast-works, but they would be sure to break before the resistless charge of the English veterans.

With his whole heart bound up in the cause to which he was prepared to give his life, if necessary, the premonition of defeat and the eventual subjugation of the Colonists by the British threw him into a state of nervous excitement which ended in a fever. While suffering, both mentally and physically, an attack was made upon him from another quarter. His sister Sarah had kept her word and had sent a full account of her brother's doings and contemplated actions to his uncle and guardian, Hon. Timothy Edwards, at Elizabethtown, New Jersey. The honorable gentleman had lost no time in dispatching two tried and trusty emissaries, duly authorized and empowered to take forcible possession, if necessary, of the body of Aaron Burr and bring it back with them to his guardian's house.

Remembering that his nephew was more disposed to listen to entreaties than to obey commands, on arriving at Cambridge, in accordance with instructions, one of the emissaries was deputed to make a friendly visit to Burr. The messenger presented a letter from the uncle, which Burr read through carefully. There was not a

word of command in it; the writer entreated his nephew, on account of his youth and slight figure, which was not fitted to stand the hardships of war, to return to him and perfect himself in the law and aid the cause of his country with his voice and pen rather than with his sword. The letter was couched in such sympathetic language that, for a moment, a feeling of homesickness overcame him and the tears rushed to his eyes. The messenger thought that the letter had done the work and told Burr that they would return home at once. The young man brushed away the tears and said in a firm voice:

“Tell my uncle and guardian that his kindly letter brought tears to my eyes; if, when I was a member of his household, he had talked to me as he has written in this letter, I probably never should have left it. But when I did leave it, I did it with the firm resolution never to enter it again. Thank my uncle for his kindness, but say that nothing can induce me to change the resolve which I have made, which is to serve my country in the field as well as I am able.”

The first messenger told his companion the result of his visit. The next day the second messenger called upon Burr and presented another letter from his uncle. This was written in a far different spirit from the first one. It virtually called Burr a rebellious young rascal who had never obeyed orders until he was obliged to; it informed him that his friends who presented the letters were authorized to bring him back by force, if necessary; that he, as his guardian, had a right

to resort to extreme measures. The closing paragraph of the letter was more pacificatory and showed some comprehension of the feelings of a high-spirited young man. It read as follows:

“Having left Litchfield in the company of Colonists to join the army, no doubt you will naturally feel an aversion to returning again to that place. To you it will appear like cowardice. I should regard it as only a proper submission to the lawful authority of your guardian.

“I am well aware that you would be averse to again becoming a member of my household, and, to speak frankly, I am not anxious that you should. I send by one of the messengers a bag, containing a goodly sum of gold, which will support you for at least a year in whatever town you choose to take up your residence.

“I suppose you will continue to apply yourself to the study of law, but I shall never give up the hope that by the blessing of God and through the influence of the prayers of your sister and your other relatives, that you will elect one day to follow in the footsteps of your revered father and grandfather.”

It was difficult for Burr to restrain his feelings while reading this letter, but when he read the closing paragraph he regained his composure.

“Where is the money?” he asked.

The second messenger, too, thought the battle was won, and taking the bag of gold from his pocket handed it to Burr.

“I will keep the money,” said the latter, “it is mine. No doubt I shall need it for my own use or to aid those who are less fortunate; but you can tell my uncle that I will go to see him when the war is over.”

The two messengers consulted together that evening. They visited the general in command and found that as young Burr was only a volun-

teer and had not been regularly enlisted, the general had no right to detain him against his own will or the command of his guardian. At their request this was put into writing and signed by the general. Next morning, armed with this, to them formidable, document, they again called upon Burr. They expressed their determination to take him back to Elizabethtown with them.

When Burr declared that he had joined the army and would never become a deserter, they showed him the paper signed by the general. Then the fiery young man lost command of himself. Feeble as he was physically, he leaped from the bed and drawing his sword from its scabbard faced his persecutors.

"If you dare lay a hand upon me," he cried, "I will cut you down as quickly as I would an enemy! And what is more, if you don't leave this room at once I will call in some of my Litchfield boys. We'll give you a coat of tar and feathers and ride you out of camp on a rail."

The two emissaries, feeling that their cause was hopeless, left Cambridge and started on their way homeward, endeavoring on the way to conjure up some idea of the reception they would meet with from the young man's guardian when they returned without him, especially when they were obliged to tell him that his nephew had taken possession of the bag of gold.

Overcome by the state of nervous tension at which he had been kept during the past three days, young Burr took to his bed again and his fever returned with increased vigor. During the fits of

delirium which attacked the sufferer he won many glorious victories at the head of his brave troops, on many hard-fought fields of battle. Abe Budlong and old Abraham Starkweather took turns watching with him, and when they were exhausted with their vigils or called away to attend to their military duties, Matthias Ogden, a college mate and true friend of Burr, sat at his bedside.

One morning, Ogden and a number of his friends were in Burr's room, talking about Arnold's proposed expedition to the North to capture Quebec. They spoke in undertones, but their words did not escape Burr, who happened to have a lucid interval just at that moment. Jumping from his bed he astonished them all by crying out:

"Where is Arnold going? To Quebec, do you say? This is glorious! I will go with you. When do you start?" Despite his earnestness, his friends could not avoid breaking into fits of laughter.

"Ef yer don't go back ter bed," said Abe Budlong, "and behave yerself, you'll be more likely ter go ter Heaven than ter Quebec."

"I will give up my hopes of Heaven," cried Burr, "if I can be one of those who enter the city and help pull down the flag of England."

To the consternation of his friends he began to dress himself. Their remonstrances availed nothing. "I am well, perfectly well!" he said. "There really has been nothing the matter with me. The lack of discipline in camp, the certainty of defeat if we are forced to meet the British

regulars in the open, and the rust of inaction, are what have overcome me. But now that I see an opportunity to meet the enemy I am as well as ever — better than ever. Come, Ogden, let us see General Arnold at once and learn if we cannot be included among the favored ones who are destined to win this glorious victory.”

The result of the visit to General Arnold was that Burr, Ogden, Abe Budlong, Starkweather and his son, and five other residents of Litchfield obtained permission to go with the expedition.

A force of twelve hundred men, comparatively well-uniformed and equipped, and fairly well-drilled, owing to Burr's persistent endeavors, set sail from Newburyport full of patriotism and the hope of victory. Three months later, less than half this number reached the Chaudière. Their uniforms were bedraggled with mud and torn almost into shreds, from their contact with the underbrush in the virgin forest through which they were obliged to force their way; many were hatless, many shoeless, and many more, destitute of both these articles of apparel; much of their food and ammunition had been left behind on account of the impossibility of transporting it; much of the necessary supplies of an army had been lost by the overturning of boats in the rock-ribbed rivers; much more of their ammunition had been wasted in vain attempts to secure wild game for food, for the denizens of the forest had been startled from their nests and lairs by the advancing force and had sought safety in flight.

Often had Burr suggested to the officer in

command that half a dozen men armed with rifles should be sent ahead of the main column, fully a mile in advance, to look for game and thus secure a supply of food for the main body. He had argued that this small force could also pick out the most desirable route for the army to follow. They could go provided with axes and could blaze the trees in such a way that their course could be easily followed. He offered to lead this party and to secure five volunteers to accompany him. His request was not complied with, and the army, to call it such, reduced to a state of semi-starvation, pushed on with the hope still high in their breasts that, even in their unfavorable condition, they could carry by assault the battlemented fortresses of Quebec.

From his earliest youth young Burr had been most abstemious as regards both food and drink. Despite his small stature and slight frame, he bore the fatigue of the march wonderfully well, being ever at the head of the advancing column. Strong men fell by the wayside from day to day, overcome by exposure or by weakness resulting from the lack of food.

One of those upon whom these privations bore very hard was old Abraham Starkweather. Had it not been for his vigorous constitution and his daily inurement to the muscle-making duties of the village blacksmith, he would have given up much sooner. One evening, when it was thought that the Chaudière was not distant more than another day's march, he asked his son Jonathan and young Burr to come and sit down beside his

camp-fire, as he had something to say to them. They complied with his request. The old man began by saying:

“I don't blame you, Aaron, for trying to make a soldier of me, and I don't blame myself for coming on this expedition. My father's mother used to see sights and have strange visions, and I believe the faculty, whatever it was, has come down to me. I am feeling pretty well to-night, but that don't count against my dream. In it I died, and you buried me here in the wilds. Now don't get frightened, Jonathan; p'raps it'll come out all right. It may not be these woods, after all, but some other woods after we have captured Quebec.

“I hope it is so, but it is better to be prepared for the worst. Now, both of you may get out of this war all right, and p'raps only one of you will. What I wanted to say was this — and I know I am speaking to friends who will do about as near what I say I wish them to do as they can.”

Jonathan took his father's hand in his and looked anxiously into his face; Burr clasped the old man's other hand and waited patiently for him to go on.

“About a month before we left Litchfield I made my will. I left all my earthly belongings to Jonathan here, excepting twenty pounds to the Widow Whittaker — she's been kind o' good to me when she has not been otherwise — but what I am blaming myself for and what makes it hard for me to die is, that I left ten pounds to that young scamp, Solomon Priestly. Now let me tell

you something, Jonathan. That will o' mine is under the anvil. I tipped it over one day to put the will under it, and then tipped it back. I don't believe there's another man in Litchfield that could do it alone and I don't believe there's any two men will try it unless there is some good reason for it. Now what I want you to do, Jonathan, if you get back all right, is to tip that anvil over, get that will, and put it into the forge when there's a good hot fire, and I'll forgive you for doing it, and I'll explain, so the law won't hold you accountable for it. Give the widow her twenty pounds, but if you let that Solomon Priestly get hold of a penny of my money, I'll haunt you as long as you live!"

Suddenly the old man stopped and scratched his hatless head:

"No, that won't do at all; I ferget. Now I remember that I put in the will, that if Jonathan died before I did, all that I possessed was to go to little Phœbe Calkins, and by George! I s'pose that kind o' left out the widow and Solomon. You're a lawyer, Aaron, p'raps you can tell me."

"Yes," said Burr, "if your son dies before you do, the last provision of your will will hold and the first part of it will be set aside."

"Then it is all right!" cried the old man. "If Jonathan and I both peter out, and you get through all right, Aaron, you just find that will and see that Phœbe Calkins gets what I want her to have."

Dreams are either ghostly phantoms or stern realities. They are the former when they are fol-

lowed by events which bear no resemblance to their foreshadowings. They are the latter when their premonitions are verified.

The next day brought them to another portage. The few boats which they still had with them were unloaded and then reloaded with the scanty stock of ammunition and other military supplies, and in charge of volunteers were once more floating in the almost unnavigable river. Suddenly, there came a cry of warning from the men on shore and those in the rear boats. The foremost boat, in which young Jonathan Starkweather sat at the bow, had caught upon a rocky ledge in the river and had been swung around by the force of the current. Despite the efforts of Jonathan and his three companions to prevent such a disaster, the boat was overturned and the men and stores thrown into the water. Young Starkweather must have struck upon a sharp ledge and been either stunned or badly cut by the fall. Although his companions looked eagerly for him their search was unavailing. It is probable that some of the stores fell upon him and prevented his body from coming to the surface.

Old Abraham seemed to lose heart when Burr brought him the sad news. "I didn't tell him last night, Aaron," said the old man, with a quivering voice, "because I hoped against hope that it would not turn out that way; but in my dream it came to me that my son would die first and that I should follow. Part of the dream has come true, and I figure the other part will be pretty soon." Burr tried to cheer the old man up and said he

would come and sleep beside his camp-fire that night. This pleased Abraham very much.

"I give him up willingly," said he, as they sat by the burning logs. The weather was very cold and neither of them had partaken of any food since morning — there was nothing to eat. Sleep was all that they had to rely upon to give them enough strength for the next day's march. "I give him up willingly," the old man repeated; "he died for his country, just as much as he would if he had been shot down in battle; but I s'pose there is more honor in being shot down than in being drowned. If I had another son, Aaron, I would give him up, too, if the Lord willed it; but as the case stands now, all there's left of the Starkweather family is this old hulk of mine. Well, don't ferget, Aaron, if I don't live it out, and you do, don't ferget to see that Phoebe Calkins gets what I want her to have. I'm kind o' pleased, after all, and it makes me more willin' to die, to know that I was such a darned poor lawyer that I cut that Solomon Priestly out of his ten pounds when I didn't mean to do it when I made the will."

Wrapped in their soiled and torn blankets, youth and old age slept side by side through that cold winter's night. Burr awoke first. The fire, not having been replenished during the night, had died out. Burr leaned over, and pulling the folds of the blanket back, looked at the quiet, calm face of his sleeping friend. He started back. Surely, that ashen pallor could betoken but one thing; and yet there was a sweet smile upon the face of the old man. Burr grasped his hand and placed

his finger upon his wrist. There was no pulse. He unbuttoned the faded blue coat, with its tarnished brass buttons, and put his hand upon his friend's heart. It was still. Father and son had given up their lives upon their country's altar, and were reunited.

The ground was frozen too hard to allow the digging of a grave; besides, there was no time, for the orders were to move forward as soon as it was light. With the aid of several of the Litchfield boys, the body of the old soldier was covered with snow, and branches and boughs of trees were piled upon it to protect it as long as possible from the attacks of wild beasts.

At night of that day some of the scouts who had been sent out returned with the welcome tidings that the Chaudière was only a few miles away and that they had met messengers from Arnold who said that the general had secured large quantities of food, and that a day of feasting and rejoicing would soon come. This announcement was received with feeble cheers by the men. Hope returned, and they forgot for a time the gnawings of hunger, for their minds were filled with thoughts of the feast and victory which were to come.

CHAPTER IV

A CRY FOR VENGEANCE

THE reports brought in by the scouts as to General Arnold's success in obtaining food were verified when the banks of the Chaudière at last were reached. Where there had been famine, there was now surfeit. Despite the temptation to indulge to excess Burr maintained his abstemious habit and cautioned his companions to partake sparingly until their stomachs became stronger and better able to digest the solid food. This wholesome advice was followed by the majority, but many of the famished soldiers could not control their appetites, and acted more like ravenous wolves than human beings; the result was that many who had passed through the Valley of Starvation safely, died from over-indulgence at the very foot of the Hill of Plenty.

When the supply of wholesome, strengthening food sent the red blood once more coursing through their veins, the soldiers turned their attention to mending the rents in their tattered clothing, cobbling their worn-out shoes, and to making a careful inspection of their arms and ammunition.

From a purely military point of view they were a pitiable crew in appearance; but they were men with a purpose. That purpose was the capture of the enemy's stronghold, and even if their

physical condition had been worse, it would not have dampened their ardor, however much it might have weakened their efficiency.

When the troops reached the historic Plains of Abraham, the only feasible means of approach to the beleaguered city, General Arnold called a council of war to settle upon the plan and time of attack. It was finally decided that the idea of capturing the city was hopeless, unless reinforcements could be secured.

There was only one place from which assistance could be obtained in season to be of any value. Gen. Richard Montgomery had captured Montreal, and was quartered there with his victorious troops; but that city was one hundred and twenty miles away. The road to it lay through the enemy's country and was lined with British troops on the lookout for spies and emissaries. The man who undertook the mission must perform it with but faint prospect of success, and must take his life in his hands. The general in command could not detail a man to make the journey—it would be too much like sending him to his death. No; if a courier went, he must be a volunteer and must assume the whole responsibility.

Reports of Burr's endurance, courage, and fortitude in the midst of difficulties and privation had reached the ears of General Arnold. Undoubtedly, here was a young man ambitious for military glory. He would send for him, tell him what must be done unless the expedition were to be acknowledged a failure at the outset, and see what he would say.

General Benedict Arnold was a lion in battle. He had shown his courage conspicuously in many engagements. He was one of those generals who lead their men to battle in person, instead of watching their advance from afar. Men capable of positive action are likely to speak positively. Arnold, in his interview with Burr, painted in strong colors the deplorable condition of his little army. All that could save it from a disastrous retreat and the ignominy attending such a course, was the arrival of reinforcements. But how could they be secured? Then, he deftly answered his own question :

“If General Montgomery were acquainted with the situation he would evacuate Montreal and come to our assistance.”

“I understand, General,” said Burr, “you need a messenger to go to Montreal and induce General Montgomery to come to our assistance. I will go!”

Burr began his preparations immediately. He could not expect to make the journey wearing a uniform which would lead to his instant detention; yet he must go fully armed, for he was resolved to defend himself to the last extremity if attacked. He finally decided that the guise which would be of most service to him was that of a French priest.

The coarse, heavy, gown-like garment, held by a girdle about the waist, effectually concealed a brace of pistols and a sword. He discarded his three-cornered hat, pulling the heavy cowl over his head and about his face so that but little more than his eyes were exposed.

In the afternoon of the day fixed upon for his departure, he received verbal instructions from General Arnold, for it was deemed extra hazardous for him to be the bearer of a written communication. Shortly before midnight Burr donned his disguise and accompanied by two trusty soldiers, who had been made acquainted with the object of his mission, started on his perilous journey. The soldiers went but a short distance with him. About half a mile from camp, they shook hands with him, wished him a safe and successful trip, and returned to report to the general in command that Burr was on his way.

The night was dark and the wind bitter — but this was the road to glory! — and Burr trod on, happy at heart and confident of success. He went through long stretches of woods, dark and solemn as the grave. The wind whistled through the tree-tops and seemed to be chanting a requiem for lost souls. To this dispiriting music was added the howling of wolves, and the hand of the solitary traveller more than once sought the hilt of his sword or the butt of a pistol.

On, on he went, until, turning to look back, he saw the bright sun resting upon the horizon, and knew that the first day of his perilous trip had begun.

About noon he came in sight of a cottage. On reaching it he halted and asked for some refreshment, which was willingly given him, but pay therefor was refused. No sooner had he offered the money than he realized that he had made a mistake; it evidently was not the custom

in Canada for even the poorest peasant to accept money for food furnished to a priest. Burr spoke French fluently, and explained to the peasant that the money had not been offered him as pay for the food, but as a gift.

“I have just come from Quebec,” said he, “and while there I collected considerable money to be given to those worthy peasants who have suffered from the severity of the winter and are likely to be in dire want before spring comes, unless their necessities are relieved.”

Feeling that he had allayed any suspicion which he might have aroused, he bestowed his blessing on the peasant, his wife, and the family of four children, who gazed at the unusual visitor in open-mouthed astonishment.

As night again approached, Burr felt that he must find some opportunity for rest and sleep. He had been eighteen hours upon the road, had eaten only once, and had rested not at all. Surely, he thought, there must be some farmhouse within the next hour's walk. The road now led through a thick growth of trees and became narrowed to half its previous width. Burr had progressed less than one hundred feet into the forest when he was startled by a sound which came from behind the trees a short distance ahead of him. He stopped and listened. Suddenly, with a hoarse growl, a huge English mastiff bounded into the road and rushed towards him. Burr prepared to receive him in a friendly manner, but as they neared each other he saw that the brute was angry and must be looked upon as a foe rather than as a friend.

It took but an instant for a quick-witted and active young man like Burr to unfasten his girdle and draw his sword. As the dog sprang towards him, with mouth distended, he gave the savage animal a blow upon the head with the flat side of the weapon, which stunned it for awhile. When it recovered, however, its ugliness had been increased by the blow and it made ready to spring at the throat of its adversary. Burr realized that the situation meant death for either man or dog. He drew one of his pistols and fired; as he did so, he jumped backward to prevent the body of the dog from falling upon him. The animal lay writhing and howling with pain. Its power for aggressiveness was gone, but life was not extinct. To end its sufferings, Burr approached and gave it the *coup de grace* with his sword.

As he withdrew the blood-stained weapon from the body of the dog, he looked up and met the gaze of a man of small stature, but with a villainous-looking face, who was standing not more than ten feet away.

"Oh!" cried the little man, and then he gave a low chuckle; "so you belong to an order of priests that goes armed with a pistol and sword, do you, my young man? It is the first time I ever met one of your breed."

"And it will be the last time!" cried Burr, stepping over the body of the dead dog and advancing towards the man, sword in hand.

The man jumped nimbly behind a large tree and looked around the side of the trunk at Burr. "What made you kill my dog?" he snarled.

“Why do you let loose such a savage brute in the public highway to molest honest travellers?” Burr inquired in turn.

“He is not my dog,” said the man.

“Then you lied a moment ago, when you said he was. To whom did he belong?”

“To a man who is as big a brute as he was,” was the little man’s reply. “If you want to know who owned him, ask at the first house you come to after you get through the woods. He belonged to a Frenchman named Boncourt. It is lucky that you are a priest, and particularly lucky that you have a sword and pistols; for if you stop there over night, as you will have to, or else freeze to death on the road, unless your weapons protect you he will cut your throat, take your money, and bury your body under his barn, despite your holy garb.”

“Well,” said Burr, “as the dog was not your property, I see no reason for spending any more time with you, and we will part company. As for Monsieur Boncourt, if he attacks me, he will meet the same fate that his dog has.”

As the little man had said, there was a farmhouse only a few hundred feet beyond the end of the woods. Burr rapped at the door and asked for food and shelter for the night. The door was opened by a ruddy-faced, genial-looking Frenchman, apparently about forty-five years of age, and a hearty welcome was given to the tired traveller. Burr gave his name as Father François. His host said that his name was Achille Boncourt. M. Boncourt then introduced his wife and his

family of six children, the oldest of whom was a dark-haired, dark-eyed boy, about twelve years old.

Food was placed promptly upon the table, but Burr, as was his custom, partook of but little. His host and hostess pressed him to eat more, and brought from the cupboard many delicacies with which to tempt his appetite.

"I am afraid," said Burr, "that you may regret the great hospitality which you have shown me, when I relate the story of an unfortunate occurrence which happened at the other end of the wood, yonder. I know you will feel your loss greatly, for a good dog is of great value to a farmer; and I should not have killed him had I not supposed him vicious. I was fearful that he would tear me limb from limb, and was forced to kill him."

M. Boncourt looked at Father François with an expression of astonishment which evidently was not feigned. "My dog?" he cried. "I have no dog. I have had half a dozen, but a neighbor of mine, an Englishman named Ventress, bears me a grudge, and all of them have been poisoned or have mysteriously disappeared. Who told you it was my dog?"

Burr described the little man who had attributed the ownership of the dog to M. Boncourt. "That man was always a liar!" cried M. Boncourt, vehemently. "From your description I know the man. It was Ventress, my neighbor. He said that one of my fences was on his land, and we went to law about it; but the judge

declared that a long strip of land, ten feet wide, which I had always supposed was part of Ventress's farm, really belonged to me. I moved my fences and took possession of the land, and since that time this Ventress has been my bitter enemy. The dog was his."

Turning to his oldest son, Thaddeus, the father asked: "What kind of a dog was Ventress's?"

"What they call an English mastiff," said Thaddeus, in a low voice, and he turned his brilliant dark eyes towards those of the priest and met the gaze of a pair even more brilliant than his own.

Burr decided that it was best not to awaken still further the ire of the Frenchman by telling him what Ventress had said about his murdering and robbing travellers. Ventress had lied about the dog; evidently the story about Boncourt was a base fabrication, founded upon his hatred for one who had beaten him at law.

The front windows of the house were protected by shutters and the front door was secured by a strong oaken bar. A pleasant conversation in which M. Boncourt and his wife joined, followed the supper. Finally, Madame Boncourt excused herself with true French politeness and went upstairs, followed by the younger children, leaving Burr alone with his host. Thaddeus went outside to attend to some farm duty.

In a short time he returned, his face pale and his eyes glittering with more than their usual intensity. He whispered a few words in his father's

ear; the latter looked at Burr and was, seemingly, on the point of speaking.

Thaddeus had said: "The English soldiers are coming!"

Suddenly a loud knock was heard at the barred door, followed by the harsh tones of a man's voice.

"Open the door!" it cried. "Open the door in the name of the King!"

Monsieur Boncourt immediately put the snuffer over the candle, extinguishing it. Then he led the way to a rear room, followed closely by Burr and young Thaddeus.

"I will go," said Burr. "They are after me." He took M. Boncourt's hand in his and placed it upon the butts of his pistols and the hilt of his sword.

"You are not a priest, then?" cried M. Boncourt. "You are disguised? What for?"

"The American General Arnold," said Burr in a low voice, "is before Quebec; he is going to capture it. I am on my way to General Montgomery at Montreal to ask him to come to General Arnold's assistance. This man Ventress saw me kill the dog, and knowing me to be armed he naturally suspects that I am a spy. I must leave your house at once, for my presence here will get you into trouble. My only safety is in reaching a monastery. Is there one near by?"

"About five miles from here," said M. Boncourt. "Thaddeus knows the way. He will lead you there. Go, my son, we hate the British and we are glad to help those who also hate them."

During this hurried conversation the blows upon the door and the loud demands for admittance had been continued. Ventress, who was one of the party, discovered that a lot of brushwood which had been gathered for fuel was piled up against the side of the house, and a fiendish idea took possession of him. He went to the Corporal, who, with five soldiers, had come to arrest the spy whom Ventress had sworn he had seen enter the house. The Corporal was enraged at the Frenchman's failure to open the door when he demanded it, and when Ventress suggested that if they set the brushwood on fire it would soon smoke them out, the officer laughed and sent two men to ignite it.

Young Thaddeus was soon ready for the trip; accompanied by Burr he left the house, and they started on their way to the monastery.

Just back of the house was a steep cliff which rendered the approach to it from the rear very difficult; but M. Boncourt had constructed a secret passage by means of which he or the members of his family could easily and safely reach his farm land, which was some thirty feet lower than the small plateau upon which he had erected his house.

As soon as M. Boncourt felt sure that Father François and his son were beyond the reach of harm, he entered the front room, relighted the candle, and unbarring the front door, stood rubbing his eyes, as though he had just arisen from bed to admit his visitors. The Corporal strode into the room followed by Ventress and the soldiers.

"Where is that spy—that so-called French priest that you are harboring?" cried the Corporal.

"I am harboring no one," cried M. Boncourt. "I have seen no French priest. If you doubt me, you can search the house."

"You lie!" cried Ventress. "I met him at the other end of the wood and he killed my dog. I saw that he was armed with pistols and sword. He was no French priest! He was a spy! I followed him and saw him enter your house, Monsieur Boncourt. If you say he didn't, you lie! you lie!" and the enraged Englishman actually frothed at the mouth.

Monsieur Boncourt was naturally a peaceable man, but he had suffered much at the hands and by the speech of this man Ventress. His temper got the better of him, and grasping a heavy iron kettle that stood upon the stove, he raised it and brought it down with crushing effect upon the Englishman's head.

Ventress fell like a log to the floor. The Corporal drew his sword and advanced towards Boncourt. With a leap as sudden as that of a panther, Boncourt sprang upon him, and wresting the sword from his hand, drew back and drove it to the hilt through his body.

At that moment the flames from the ignited brushwood lighted up the window at the side of the room and a strong smell of smoke filled the apartment. With a cry like that of a maddened bull, Boncourt grasped a large carving knife which lay upon the table and rushing forward, before the astonished soldiers could intercept him, left the

house, and made his way to the pile of burning brush. One of the soldiers followed him, while the remaining four took up the bodies of Ventress and the Corporal and carried them from the room, which both smoke and flames were now invading.

The soldier who had followed Boncourt reached him just as the Frenchman, wild with frenzy, was preparing to grasp the burning wood with his bare hands and drag it from its proximity to the house.

The soldier caught him by the collar of his coat, intending to make him a prisoner; Boncourt turned upon him, knife in hand. They clenched and wrestled, the soldier trying to obtain possession of the knife and the Frenchman to retain his hold upon it. The flames from the burning brush lighted up the scene, making it as bright as day.

The soldier, being the stronger man, had, while protecting himself, drawn the Frenchman towards the open space in front of the house, where he counted upon securing the assistance of his comrades. He was obliged to walk backwards. This proved fatal; for striking his heel against a projecting stump he fell. With a yell of triumph the Frenchman jumped upon him and drove the knife through his heart. But his victory was short-lived. The four soldiers aimed their muskets at him and fired simultaneously. The old man, with the blood streaming from his wounds, staggered towards the house, but fell dead just within the doorway.

When within sight of the long row of buildings which constituted the home of the monks of St. Francis, Thaddeus stopped, and pointing with his



Thaddeus Boncourt with uplifted knife.

Sinking upon his knees, holding the weapon high above his head, he swore to wreak vengeance. Page 59.

finger, said simply: "There." Burr thanked him for his kind service and offered him a reward which the boy proudly refused. As their hands fell apart, Thaddeus began: "Should your friends inquire ——"

"Tell them," said Burr, quickly, "that you saw Monsieur Adolphe Arnot safely to the gate of the monastery."

When, several hours later, young Thaddeus returned, he discovered that his happy home was no more. All that he found was a mass of charred wood, and among the ruins what he felt were the blackened bones of his father and mother, his two brothers and three sisters. In front of the house he came upon the dead body of the English soldier.

He withdrew the knife, red with blood, and sinking upon his knees, holding the weapon high above his head, he swore to wreak vengeance from that hour henceforth, as long as he should live, upon every Englishman, and upon those who spoke the English tongue.

CHAPTER V

“MONASTERY BELLS”

BURR knocked at the gate of the monastery and asked for admittance and shelter. He had drawn the cowl closely about his face. The darkness of night was little affected by the dim light thrown by the solitary candle carried by the monk who answered the summons, and his face was effectually concealed from prying eyes as he was led through corridors and passages to the presence of Father Pierre, the Prior of the monastery.

Before any inquiry was made as to his name, his business, or his destination, whatever the monastery could supply in the way of food and drink was placed before him. After the frugal meal was concluded and the assistants had left the room, the Prior for the first time manifested a desire to learn something more of his guest than that he was a tired and a hungry man.

“You are very young, sir,” he said, in a tone of inquiry, “to have taken Holy Orders.”

Father François fixed his eyes upon the Prior, and the latter grew conscious of the piercing light that came from them. What manner of priest was this? Why had not some of the fire in those eyes been dimmed by acts of devotion and penance?

"It is a secret I purpose to confide to your keeping, Father Pierre, and I do so the more cheerfully from having been taught long ago, that he who trusts to the honor of a Catholic priest is as safe as if his words were breathed only to the mountain rock."

"You have been taught aright, my son," remarked Father Pierre. "All human errors, nay, all human crimes, save only that of sacrilege, may find a safe repository in the humblest servant of our Holy Church. Yet I do not understand how this can be of any present interest to you. Your looks belie you greatly if you have sinned so deeply as to doubt of forgiveness."

"My crime, Father, is not against the divine, but against human law. I am a soldier, not a priest!"

As he spoke these words Burr unfastened his girdle, and drawing the folds of his robe aside, disclosed the uniform beneath. In his belt were two pistols, and his sword hung at his side.

"I am a traitor to the English King," he continued, "and a sworn foe to his government! It rests with you to determine how soon I shall become a victim of its tyranny. If you aid me, I hope to accomplish a great mission; if you refuse, that mission may be terminated by a halter."

Father Pierre was a loyal Frenchman, and therefore an hereditary enemy of England; he was a Catholic, and therefore felt bound to wage eternal warfare against the power that had dealt such terrible blows at his Church. He was a man, and the genuine enthusiasm which sparkled in

every feature of Burr's face won its way to his heart, and from that hour the young adventurer had a friend.

"I will serve you," at length he said, "to the extent of my ability; but to render that service effectual, you must trust me fully. Half confidences are almost always dangerous, and the parties to them not infrequently find themselves unintentionally playing at cross purposes."

"Such is my own judgment, Father," was Burr's reply. "If you will give me your attention for half an hour, you shall know all."

Burr then rapidly recounted the causes which had led to the American Revolution, and described the scene at Lexington, and the battle of Bunker's Hill. In words of fire he related the daring scheme that Arnold had formed of penetrating the wilderness and storming the heights of Quebec at a season of the year when the extreme cold would prevent reinforcements from reaching the garrison. The dangers and miseries over which the American force had thus far triumphed were concisely stated, and he ended by informing his astonished auditor that he was charged with a verbal message to Montgomery, without whose co-operation success was impossible, and all that had been accomplished would be worse than profitless.

It was a scene worthy of the brush of one of the great Italian masters—the venerable priest, his form bent and his locks whitened by the frosts of seventy winters, leaning his elbows upon the table and listening with rapt attention to the boy

orator and soldier while he gave vent to a people's wrongs and proclaimed their unalterable purpose to conquer, or perish in the attempt. The varied play of his features gave evidence of the mingled feelings which were struggling within him. The film of age passed from his eyes, and when the narrative ended he struck his hand upon the table with uncanonical energy, and exclaimed:

"You will conquer, my son! Such men are ever victors! A people animated by the love of liberty and endowed with the courage and energy which you have already exhibited, require little training to become invincible. The Colonies are lost to Britain!"

"I rejoice, Father, to hear you speak so hopefully of our cause. To the overwise and the fearful, it looks dark enough. Do I trespass on forbidden ground by inquiring if you have always been a priest?"

"No. In my youth I bore arms in a cause less holy than yours. The wild excitement of battle, the gloom of defeat, and the fierce joy of victory have been experienced in turn; and none of them are entirely forgotten, though years of penance and prayer have done much to blot out their memory. But it avails not to recur to such things now. By morning I will find a messenger who shall bear your tidings to General Montgomery."

"Pardon me, Reverend Sir, I must be that messenger, myself!"

"You? Why, if you elude the British scouts, who will be sure to be on the watch to intercept

any communication between the two American commanders, you could not bear the fatigue and exposure that must be undergone, and if you attempt it your slight frame will wither before half the distance is accomplished."

"You forget that I have just traversed five times that distance through an unpeopled wilderness, and may well consider the journey before me as a pleasure trip, in comparison. Remember, too, that my honor as a soldier is involved. I have no right to transfer to another the duty assigned to me. Whether he failed or succeeded, men would call me a coward, if they did not consider me a traitor. It was not for such a purpose that I sought your convent. Only give me the information you possess of the country, the woods, and the people, and I shall go on my way with a light heart and a grateful memory of your kindness."

Father Pierre made no immediate answer. He was absorbed in thought. His lips moved, but no sound escaped them. The furrows on his brow deepened and it was evident that his eye took in no object distinctly. His reverie lasted so long that Burr began to be doubtful and impatient. He felt greatly relieved when at last the old man said:

"I believe you are right — at least, I am sure that at your age I should have reasoned as you do. Leave all your preparations to me; it is past the tenth hour and you must be stirring early. Here is your chamber." So saying, he opened the door of a little room and, pointing to a low couch which

was almost its only furniture, bestowed upon the youth his blessing and left him to repose.

Seating himself at the table from which his guest had arisen, he was for some time engaged in self-communion. Then he touched a small silver bell and said to the servitor who answered it:

“Tell Raoul that I would speak to him.”

Very soon a man, apparently about forty-five or fifty, but in reality less than thirty, entered the room and bent one knee respectfully to the Prior. Mental and physical suffering, endured since he was a youth, had taken away the springy lightness of his step, but there was no sign of decay in the manly form that accorded well with the bold and determined cast of his features.

“Rise, Raoul, and be seated. If I remember aright, I have heard you murmur at the treaty which ceded Canada to England.”

“Though I was but a boy, I fought under Montcalm,” replied the man, his eyes glowing with the recollection; “and I hope it is no sin to long for a time to come when France shall see such another leader to break the chain that galls us.”

“France will send no leader here, my good Raoul, but the chain may be broken, nevertheless. The English Colonies have revolted. If Canada unites with them, our ultimate triumph is certain.”

“Hope it not, Father. Their raw levies and half armed militia will be swept away like chaff by the British regulars.”

“Your own experience should have taught you better, Raoul, for you have seen these same raw levies save an entire army from utter annihilation.”

“So I did, in the woods and among the mountain glens. In the open field the result would have been widely different. George Washington and his rangers would not have stood ten minutes before the same troops whose flight they that day caused.”

“I doubt it,” said Father Pierre, “but let it be granted. What is there now to compel George Washington to risk pitched battles in open field? The mountains and the woods still offer their protection, and if he is followed there, Braddock’s story may be rewritten on a bloodier page.”

“I hope you are nearer to the mark than I am. I know that whatever one strong arm can do to drive the British lions from America, will be gladly tried. Point out the way, good Father, and you will have no cause to murmur at my supineness.”

“There was a young priest who sought our wall for shelter to-night. Did you mark him well?”

“I saw not his features,” Raoul answered, “but only noted his feeble and delicate appearance. It did not seem to me that he could bear much more.”

“Therein you are in error. That boy has just performed a journey that would have taxed your strong frame to the uttermost. He is a soldier, attached to the troops now encamped before Quebec, and bears dispatches to General Montgomery. He needs a guide, who, to courage and discretion, adds a perfect knowledge of the country. There is not a man in Canada so well fitted for the work as you are, and I have sent for you to request that you will undertake it.”

"Your Reverence's will is law to me. Gladly will I pilot this young man to Montreal; gladly will I stand by him in the battle's front. I have an old grudge against the banner that floats upon the walls of Quebec and I would give ten years of my life to tear it down."

"Then leave me, Raoul, and make the necessary preparations for the journey. You must be on your road before dawn."

The Frenchman made a low bow of reverential respect and left the aged priest alone. Placing writing materials on the table, he indited letter after letter, until the great convent bell tolled the hour of three. Raoul was then aroused, and proceeded to harness two strong ponies to one of the rough wagons of the country, while the Father next awakened his sleeping guest.

When everything was ready for Burr's departure, Father Pierre placed in his hands the packet of letters which he had spent the night in writing. "Here," he said, "are letters to every religious house on your route. If anything should befall you and you need assistance, have no hesitation in going to the nearest one. It will not be needful to repeat all you have recounted to me, although you may do so safely. My letters will insure you a hearty welcome and whatever protection can be given."

Raoul entered and said that all was ready for their departure. At that moment the sound of a melodious chant fell upon Burr's ears. The music came from a distant part of the monastery, but the night was so still that it was distinctly audible.

The young soldier was easily impressed, and as he listened he bowed his head.

"Come with me, my son," said Father Pierre. "A thought has occurred to me. I shall do penance for not having thought of it before. Be not impatient, Raoul, I am going to ask the blessing of God upon this young man, and pray for the success of his mission."

Burr followed Father Pierre through passages and corridors and cloisters until the great chapel was reached. There were gathered the monks, some fifty in number; they were still singing; what had seemed but a little brooklet of melody was now a mighty river, and through the frame of the young soldier went a feeling of reverence and even awe.

When the chant ceased, Father Pierre, taking Burr by the arm, led him forward until they stood before the assembled body of monks. Then Father Pierre spoke:

"Brethren, we have often thought, and many times we have spoken of the possibility of wresting our beloved land from the hands of the despoiler and restoring it once more to the domain of its rightful ruler.

"When Montcalm fell, we lost our greatest leader. We have waited, and hoped, and prayed, that another might arise to take his place. Our prayers have been answered. Here," cried Father Pierre, as he placed his hand upon Burr's shoulder, "is our deliverer!"

One of the younger monks, Father Anthony by name, evinced in his face a strong expression



Father Pierre, Major Burr, and the Monks.

“Draw your sword, young soldier, and I will bless it and your holy mission.”

of doubt. This did not escape Father Pierre, who said:

“You are not satisfied, Father Anthony.”

“It will take a soldier, not a priest,” was the reply, “to free Canada from the hands of the English.”

“And who said he was a priest?” cried Father Pierre. “There are those who steal the livery of God in which to serve the devil. Why should it not be worn for a better purpose—to serve one’s native land?”

“As the Prior spoke, with his own hands he unfastened the girdle from Burr’s waist and threw back the woolen robe, disclosing the young soldier, uniformed and armed, to the astonished gaze of the monks.

Once more Father Pierre lifted his voice: “The Americans have besieged Quebec. They have taken the city of Montreal. This young soldier is on his way to General Montgomery to ask him to come to the aid of General Arnold at Quebec. When Quebec falls, the French will rise and drive their English oppressors from the land. Draw your sword, young soldier, and I will bless it and your holy mission.”

Burr drew the weapon from his scabbard and held it aloft.

“There is blood upon it!” cried Father Pierre.

Burr, in his excitement, had forgotten that the weapon bore signs of his conflict with Ventress’s mastiff. Using the French tongue, he spoke:

“*C'est le sang du chien d'un Anglais qu'a disputé mon passage.*”

What he had intended to say was plain in his mind and he had said it in French as well as he knew how, but it was misunderstood, and both Father Pierre and the listening monks supposed that the stains upon the sword were caused by the blood of an Englishman and not by that of his dog.

Burr was not ashamed, Protestant though he was, to bend his knee to receive the benediction of the patriotic priest. Father Pierre placed his hands upon the sword, and then upon the head of the young soldier, breathing a prayer for his safety and the success of his mission.

As Burr left the chapel in company with the Prior, the monks sang the "Te Deum," and it was some time after Burr and Raoul had progressed upon their way before the sound of the monks' voices died away in the distance.

CHAPTER VI

THE LILIES OF FRANCE

BURR wished to learn something of the temper and character of his guide, whose features he had not yet seen and whose many robes of fur hid even the outlines of his athletic form. A few brief questions led to more general conversation, and Burr was surprised to find that the man who now acted in a capacity scarcely removed from that of a servant, was endowed with an intellect of high order, improved and strengthened by education, to which was added a knowledge of the world far deeper than he himself could claim. He waited impatiently for the appearance of daylight in order to judge how far the countenance of the man would remove or confirm the impression his conversation had made.

The air was filled with frost, and the rays of the bright stars which penetrated to earth seemed as if frozen by the way and hung like glittering icicles from the arched vault above. Onward through the deep snow sped the tough and wiry horses, and exultingly in the still night air sounded the voice of Raoul Audigier, as he narrated the wild adventures and told of the battles in which he had borne a part, when the Lilies of France waved over the Province of Canada and along the banks of the Ohio.

“It was in the year '55, before your birth, as I should judge,” he said, “when Braddock, at the head of a gallant army, came to drive us from a little fort we had erected at the junction of the Allegheny and the Monongahela. We had early notice of his movements and formed, at leisure, our plans for interrupting his march. It was in the month of July, and the sun came scorchingly down, even through the leafy covert where we lay in ambush. Afar off we saw the scarlet uniforms and bright muskets of the British regulars flashing in the sunbeams, and over them the Lion Banner floating in stern and haughty defiance.

“My heart was softer then; it has become hard after undergoing the hard knocks of more than twenty years, and although they were foes and I was but a boy, I felt a cold sensation creep over me as I watched them moving unconsciously to certain defeat.

“There were no scouts in front or on the flanks, and to crown the madness of folly of all his dispositions, Braddock had placed the Virginia Rangers in the rear and assigned the advance to a body of light horse utterly unfit for service in the thick woods and among the mountain glens. We were not over eight hundred and fifty strong, and had gone out mainly for the purpose of delaying the British march. When our commander, De Beaujeu, observed the order in which the British were approaching, he could scarcely credit the evidence of his senses. Very soon two or three of our scouts came up from either flank and made hurried reports. A glad smile lighted up the

features of our commander, and turning to an officer who stood near, he said: 'They have given us a victory, Bienville, when I only hoped to give them a check. Reserve your fire until you hear a rifle shot on the right. That army is doomed!'

"A deep ravine to the right was lined by our Indian allies, and there Bienville hastened, to restrain them until the enemy were completely in the toils.

"Steadily and in firm order the English veterans came on. Nothing had occurred to arouse their suspicions, and although within thirty yards of us, they did not dream of a lurking foe. The sharp report of a rifle rang through the forest, and the officer who led the advance fell from his horse before its echoes died away. A heavy volley in front and from either flank was poured upon the astonished soldiery, and a yell arose as wild and terrible as if a thousand fiends had broken loose from the regions of the damned."

When Raoul reached this point of his narrative, the travellers came to a long range of deeply drifted snow, and the mettlesome horses required his undivided attention until possible dangers had been overcome. Burr had read the story of Braddock's defeat many times, but the recital of the events of this decisive battle from the lips of a participant was so thrilling that his inherent martial ardor was aroused, and if, at that moment, the snowy waste had been a battlefield, he would have welcomed the change with pleasure.

Raoul resumed his story: "The advance guard was annihilated by that destructive fire; still

Braddock pressed on at the head of his main body, in the faint hope of closing with us and terminating the contest by the bayonet. In attempting to deploy into line, they were thrown into confusion by the inequalities of the ground. At the same moment a leaden hail was showered upon them from three sides at once and again the wild yell of the Indian warriors shook the forest and reverberated among the mountains.

“Nobly and bravely did the English soldiers that day maintain the high character they had acquired in many a stern encounter. But what could human courage do against a contending foe whose deadly volleys it was impossible to return? They were broken at length, rallied, reformed again and again, only to be again and again broken by the messengers of doom that continually went forth from our secret coverts. With that lofty disdain for their enemy’s tactics which British military officers have always shown when engaged in battle, Braddock had given orders that none of his men should take shelter during the fight. The Provincials, however, who were used to Indian warfare, soon sought shelter. This so enraged Braddock, that riding up to one of them he ordered him to come into the open ground. The Provincial refusing, Braddock cut him down with his sword. The Provincial’s brother saw the act, and incensed at the folly and the inhumanity of it, raised his rifle and shot Braddock in the back. Previous to the fall of Braddock, all of his aides, with one exception, had been either killed or wounded. This exception was the one who now

leads on your armies against the British — George Washington.

“Up to this time it had been a massacre rather than a battle, but now the rangers came up from the rear and threw themselves between us and the bleeding ranks of the luckless regulars. The face of affairs was instantly changed. They understood the warfare of the woods as well as we did, and were fettered by no foolish pride in the possibility of practicing the tactics of Europe in the wilds of America. Promptly availing themselves of every sheltering object, they returned our fire with fatal effect. De Beaujeu was mortally wounded and our advance so much checked, that the shattered remnant of Braddock’s army was enabled to recross the Monongahela. But for Washington and his rangers not one British soldier would have escaped to tell the disastrous tale of that day’s battle. As it was, they lost all their baggage, artillery, and munitions, and our Indian warriors carried seven hundred and fifty scalps into Fort Du Quesne as additional trophies of victory.”

“That fight took place some twenty years ago,” remarked Burr. “You must have been very young to go to war.”

“As I have told you,” said Raoul, “I was but a boy; but when a nation is in peril its boys cannot wait for the slow course of time to make them men. How old are you?” he asked, abruptly, as he looked into Burr’s face.

“I lack two months of being twenty years of age,” was the reply. “I have been studying the

art of war and military tactics for the past two years."

Raoul mused. "I was but fourteen years of age," said he, in a low voice, "when Montcalm fell and the British captured Quebec. I wish you success," he went on, "and trust that you will achieve it; but I am not over-hopeful. If Montcalm, the bravest of the brave, with a force twice as large as that which the British brought against him, and with the added advantage of a strongly fortified city, could not prevail, I am not confident that your raw levies of militia can long withstand the determined assaults of the invincible British regulars. If Braddock's wisdom, meaning by wisdom the experience of one's self or that of others, had been equal to his bravery, Canada would have fallen into English hands many years before it did. And your rank?" queried Raoul, as he again looked searchingly into Burr's face.

"I am an aide-de-camp."

"If your mission is successful," said Raoul, "you will be promoted."

"I should prefer," was the reply, "that my advancement should come from service in the field, rather than as a reward for being the bearer of dispatches."

"Take my advice," said Raoul, "accept what comes to you; make no conditions, and ask no questions."

Burr had started several times to ask Raoul a question, but for various reasons had postponed it. The time for it seemed now to have come:

"Shall you not join our army at Montreal and return with us to Quebec?"

“No,” was the reply. “I have given you one of my reasons. I am not sanguine of your success and I do not wish Quebec to be the scene of a second defeat of my hopes. Besides, I have a private reason for not leaving this vicinity. My parents were born in France and my grandparents were Corsicans; there is in my blood a taint of the vendetta. If a man injures me, I can never forgive him until he is dead. I have told you so much, I will tell you the rest, or you may misunderstand and misjudge me. I have good reasons to seek for vengeance.”

Burr listened attentively. Surely, this man of thirty had had an extensive experience during his comparatively short life. Through his mind ran the thought: “To what position shall I have attained when I reach that age?”

“As I told you,” said Raoul, “I was with my father when Braddock was defeated; in that battle he met his death. He was shot down before my eyes by a British captain. I did not then know his name, but I remember his insolent face.

“Ten years later he came to our house to arrest me for alleged treacherous language. I was a man grown, then. I would have gone with him peaceably, but in response to my mother’s piteous appeals for mercy to her son, he used foul and insulting language to her. Grasping a heavy stick of wood that lay beside the stove, I felled him to the floor before he could draw his sword. My mother and I, taking what few things we could, fled immediately to Quebec, where her brother lived. She was overcome by the fatigue

and exposure of the journey and died a few days after our arrival. From that time I lost heart; I was an orphan and my native land was in the hands of the tyrant. I have waited and bided my time, living, for the most part of it, in convents and monasteries, where I have performed the menial duties of a servitor.

“I know this Captain Campbell is with the British army in this vicinity, but I do not know exactly where. Some day I shall meet him, and when I do, I shall kill him! I shall then thank God that my father’s death and the insult to my mother are both avenged.”

He turned towards Burr and there was a bright light in his eye. “I may be wrong about the result of the coming conflict at Quebec — I hope I am. I hope you will be successful. If you are, I shall thank God again, for, of course, if you defeat the British it does not mean that you intend to conquer and hold the country. No!” and his voice rang out on the cold, clear air, “the *fleur-de-lis* will once more wave over this fair land, as over sunny France, and King Louis will come into his own again!”

CHAPTER VII

LOST HOURS

THE supposedly young priest was conducted from convent to convent by his sagacious guide, receiving at each a warm welcome and lavish hospitality. At Three Rivers they observed a number of persons gathered about the entrance to a public house, engaged in earnest conversation which, they did not doubt, had reference to Arnold's invasion. To attempt to pass without stopping would naturally create suspicion and lead to detention. Raoul drove boldly up to the door and inquired the way to the religious house of the place, of which he pretended to be ignorant. The confident manner of the man and the priestly vestments of Burr united to deceive them, and although a few of the group eyed them suspiciously, they were permitted to proceed unmolested.

"We have had a narrow escape, Monsieur," said the guide, as soon as they were out of earshot. "For five minutes I distinctly felt the pressure of a rope about my neck."

"Was the danger really so great?" asked Burr. "I thought from your tone and manner that it was trivial."

"When you have knocked about the world as long as I have," said Raoul, "you will learn that

half of our success in life depends upon appearances. I saw in yonder group the man whom I told you above all others I have reason to hate. It has been ten years since we met, and I have changed more than he has, but the quivering of a lip, the flash of an eye, or any other appearance of unusual emotion would have betrayed me, and have subjected us to an examination which we might have found it difficult to pass through."

"The examination would have been fruitless," said Burr. "I have nothing that would betray me. The letters of Father Pierre are so worded as to remove, rather than to excite suspicion. I have no dispatches or papers of any description."

"There is, beneath that coarse robe," quietly responded Raoul, "a brace of pistols and a sword. The Catholic clergy are not usually so well provided with offensive arms."

"I am, indeed, armed, as you say, but how did you know it?"

"I should have done poor credit to my training if in travelling so far with you I had failed to discover the texture of your under garments, provided I had deemed it necessary to possess myself of the information. In this case, however, my knowledge was acquired by a simple process. You have been bumped against me at least a hundred times and I could not help feeling your arms. But here we are at the convent gate and here we must remain until to-morrow. In the meantime, I will find out what danger, if any, is ahead of us."

The possibility of a considerable detention at

this place and the certainty that when he did go he would be compelled to leave at an unusual hour and in a clandestine manner, made it necessary, in the opinion of Burr, that the object of his journey should be fully explained to the Superior of the convent, and accordingly he at once solicited a private interview of the Father.

The evening meal had long ago been concluded and the convent bells had chimed the hour of nine. Aaron Burr was still in earnest conference with the Superior. A gentle tap on the door preceded the appearance of a visitor. He was evidently expected, for the door immediately opened, and the priest, pointing to a chair, instantly inquired of the newcomer what news he had gathered.

"The country is aroused and vigilant," briefly responded the man, "and patrols of horse are scouring the roads."

"For what? Heard you for what, Julien?"

"There is a rumor of a rebel army encamped before Quebec, and it is said that rebel emissaries are travelling in disguise to create disaffection among the people."

"This is worse," said the monk, "positively much worse than I had expected. You may go, Julien," he continued, after a pause, "and partake of some needful refreshment—but first send the guide Raoul hither."

"We have need of your advice, my son," said the monk, when Audigier appeared in obedience to his summons. "Julien reports that the country people are alarmed and horse patrols are scouring

the roads. You, who are a soldier by profession, will understand what amount of danger is to be anticipated and what are the best means of avoiding it."

"I have been a soldier, Father, and remembered so much of my old calling as to go out myself on a scouting expedition this evening. Julien has not reported matters any worse than they really are."

"So I feared! So I feared! What do you advise?"

"It seems to me, Father, that there is but one thing we can safely do, and that is to remain within your walls until the patrols have disappeared. They will not molest us here and I hope and believe they will soon get tired of riding about in such bitter weather as this."

The monk freely agreed with the guide, but such an arrangement was exceedingly distasteful to Burr, and he protested against it. For every hour lost now, he argued, lessened the chances of a glorious termination to the campaign. It gave the enemy time to recover from its first panic, and what was of more importance, enabled it to add to and strengthen its fortifications. He contended that the patrols were likely to be just as vigorous some days hence as then, and added that he felt bound to make the attempt to proceed, however great the danger. The guide heard him without interruption and then calmly replied:

"I acknowledge the force of much you have said, Monsieur Burr. I know the importance of speedily reaching Montreal and it is because I do

know it that I advise the present delay. To proceed now will be to throw yourself into the hands of the enemy — not probably, but certainly. We might gain a few hours by starting at night, but the tracks left in the snow would enable them to follow at speed, and commanding, as they could and would, fresh horses at every farmhouse on the road, our escape would be impossible. We must remain, Monsieur, and if your anticipation of the continued vigor of the horsemen should prove correct, we can take advantage of the first snow-fall, which will fill up our tracks and lessen the danger by that much, at least. I am persuaded, however, that much more will be gained. The people of the country have no heart for this business, and the British horse, who have nothing more than a vague suspicion to animate them, will soon find in the severity of the weather a sufficient excuse for leaving the road and betaking themselves to comfortable quarters.”

The arguments of the guide were warmly seconded by the priest, and Burr was compelled to submit to an arrangement he could not alter. Having to remain, he did not, as many men would have done, see fit to render it disagreeable to his host by exhibiting his annoyance at the delay. During the forty-six hours of his enforced detention he seemed to forget his warlike mission entirely, and directed the conversation into channels the most familiar and the most agreeable to his hearers. Upon subjects of philosophy and religion he was at home, and the good fathers were astonished as much by the subtlety of his reasoning as by the extent of and variety of his learning.

At night, Raoul communicated the information he had gathered during the day. On the third evening, after his usual report, he said:

“The coast is nearly clear, Monsieur, and the clouds betoken a snowstorm before midnight. If you will take a few hours’ sleep, I will have everything ready for a start by the time the storm sets in.”

Burr was so delighted at the prospect of being again in motion that sleep was banished. He had no preparations to make beyond the careful examination of his arms. These were secured in a belt beneath his monk’s robe, and then he began to pace the floor with a quick and nervous tread. After awhile he seated himself, and taking up a Latin volume, tried to pass away the time in reading. His efforts to confine his attention to the book were of no avail. The words seemed to run into one another, and he became conscious that, although he had turned over a dozen leaves or more, he could not recall a single expression and was ignorant even of the subject treated of in the book. Replacing it on the table he renewed his walk more rapidly than before. Soon his steps grew slower. The furrows responsibility had made upon his brow disappeared. He had surrendered the reins to fancy, and in the buoyant hopefulness of youth had given form and substance to dreams and to the shadowy events which people the future.

Burr was but twenty, and he could but dream. It has been so ordered, that all of us, at that age, may dream if we will, and he is a poor, weak fool

who cherishes not this good gift that Providence has bestowed. The narrow-minded devotee of Mammon may say, and truly, that the brightest vision never purchased a loaf of bread or clothed a naked foot; but what would King David have said if he had been told to still the sound of grandeur that almost shivered his harp-strings in the Cave of Adullam, when the bright dream of his future greatness and glory flashed upon him? Or what would old John Milton have answered if he had been told to chase away his visions of Lucifer's rebellion in Heaven — descend from his kindred home beyond the stars, and grapple in the mire of earth for sixpence?

Dreams, however wild, however extravagant, are the gifts of God Himself, sent in infinite mercy to cheer the darkest hours of the desponding, and in infinite wisdom to stimulate the mind of man to the grandest and loftiest of its exertions. Nothing great, nothing good, was ever yet accomplished by him whose aspirations were bounded by the actual, whose efforts were limited by the probable.

Aaron Burr was still building castles in the air when Raoul, accompanied by the Father Superior, entered the room to announce that the storm had set in and that the hour for their departure had arrived.

For the first ten miles or more their progress was slow. The snow, falling in large flakes, shut out all objects at a distance of a few feet from the travellers and rendered the exercise of considerable caution necessary in picking their road. The

dreary night gave little encouragement to conversation and the silence was broken only by a brief question now and then, and an equally brief reply. No indication of pursuit had been observed and Burr was beginning to flatter himself with the belief that the danger was over, when, some time after crossing a little stream spanned by a covered bridge, his attention was attracted by a lumbering noise behind them.

“What is that?” he asked, quickly.

Raoul turned his head and listened for a moment, and then replied in a voice indicative neither of alarm nor excitement:

“It is the sound of horses’ feet on the bridge. We are being followed, Monsieur.” At the same time he plied the lash smartly to the spirited ponies, who dashed off at a greatly accelerated pace. Holding them steadily to their work, Raoul continued:

“If they have followed us from Three Rivers, they must be skillful riders, or their horses will be blown before they overtake us. Ours are as strong as when we left the convent and will bear up for many miles without flagging.”

“Is it not possible,” asked Burr, “that they may be upon some other errand?”

“Possible, certainly; though there are few errands which would draw men from their comfortable beds on such a night as this. It is of little moment, however, whether they seek us, or whether they have other business. We are upon the road under suspicious circumstances; this is a time of general distrust, which is enough to insure our

arrest if we are overtaken. May I ask, Monsieur, whether you propose, in that event, to surrender or resist?"

"Resist, by all means!" was the stern reply. "Resist, and to the death! I will not be taken alive."

"I am delighted to hear you say so. The fact is, I look upon death by a halter as altogether so vulgar and disagreeable, that I am afraid I might have been inclined to oppose your wishes if you had decided otherwise. It is to our advantage to avoid the alternative if it can be done, and as the horses will require my attention, I must request you to turn an occasional glance backward in order that we may get the earliest possible notice of their approach."

Mile after mile was passed over and still there was no appearance of the pursuing party. Raoul well understood that they might be within a few hundred yards of them nevertheless, and he kept his horses at the fastest pace they could bear without risk of breaking down. The storm was beginning to abate and the first faint streaks of light dappled the east, when Burr thought he discovered the dim outlines of horsemen in the rear.

"They are coming," said he. "Had you not better increase our speed?"

"No, they will soon overtake us at any rate. It must come to a life or death struggle sooner or later, and we shall gain some advantage by taking it coolly. Can you make out how many there are?"

"I see but three."

“Three only? There must have been more when they started — some have broken down on the way.”

For two miles farther the horses were kept at the same steady pace. It had grown brighter and the snow was falling less rapidly than it had been.

“They are gaining on us,” said Burr, “but very slowly. It will be an hour before they overtake us, even at our present rate of travelling.”

“Do you see more than three now, Monsieur?”

“There are no more.”

“Then the chances are all in our favor.” So saying, he reined the jaded horses into a slow trot, dropped the buffalo robe from his shoulders, and divested his hands of the thick fur gloves which encased them.

“Get your arms ready, Monsieur, and use them promptly. Not only our own lives, but the fate of Quebec depends upon getting the first fire.”

A few minutes only elapsed before the pursuers galloped alongside and sternly ordered them to halt. Raoul complied sullenly, inquiring for what purpose peaceful travellers were thus interrupted on their journey.

“Ah, Monsieur Audigier!” answered the leader of the party, “it seems you have forgotten an old acquaintance. You might have remembered Captain Robert Campbell of his Majesty’s Tenth Dragoons, and saved yourself the trouble of asking for his authority.”

“I remember,” said the Frenchman, with knit brow and flashing eye, “that you needlessly shot

down my father at my side, and used vile and abusive language to my mother, when I was a helpless prisoner under your charge; but I do not know that these acts give you authority to arrest me or my companion on the highway. Where are your orders?"

"Oh!" replied Campbell, drawing a pistol from his holster, "'tis seldom that I am unprepared with a sufficient warrant for the arrest of a traitor and a spy."

Quick as lightning, Raoul thrust a hand into his bosom — an instant later, a loud report shook the morning air, and Capt. Robert Campbell fell, without a groan, to the ground. The ball had reached his heart. Almost at the same time, Burr's pistol was discharged, killing another of the dragoons. The remaining one, seeing how it had fared with his comrades, hastily returned the fire, but ineffectually, and wheeling his horse, betook himself to flight. Two shots were discharged after him, by one of which his horse was so badly wounded, that at a distance of one hundred yards it stumbled and fell.

"That will do," said Raoul, coolly drawing on his gloves. "Before he can procure assistance and put another pack of bloodhounds on our trail, we shall be far beyond the danger of pursuit." It turned out as he predicted, and the remainder of the journey was unvaried by excitement or adventure.

As they neared the gates of the city, the flag of the Colonies was seen floating from many buildings. "We shall soon be at home," remarked

Burr, with a smile, turning towards his companion. "I have no home," was the reply. "Even the refuge which Father Pierre has kindly given me for so long, in exchange for meagre service, is now denied me. It will be impossible for me, for some time, at least, to return to the monastery." "Why not join our army," asked Burr, "and stand by my side when we enter Quebec a month hence?" "No," said Raoul, slowly and deliberately, "I have had enough of fighting. When Captain Campbell fell dead, the old feud between us was ended; my spirit of Corsican vengeance is satisfied. When we enter the city gates, Raoul Audigier will become dead to the world. The name has never been coupled with success—why should I wear it longer? My father's name was Louis, the same as that of our king; my mother's name was Desmarais; henceforth I shall be known as Louis Desmarais. My father was a gardener, and I know enough about it to make my livelihood on some estate in this great city."

Burr saw that his companion's mind was irrevocably made up, and he said no more. They entered Montreal, and Burr proceeded at once to the headquarters of General Montgomery to deliver his message. At the door he parted with Louis Desmarais, as both thought, forever. "You will see that the horses are returned to the monastery?" asked Louis, as he grasped Burr's hand. "I will give the matter my personal attention," was the reply. "If anything happens to them I will see that they are paid for. I was supplied with money for my journey and will retain enough of it to

secure Father Pierre against loss." The two men tightened their grip for an instant; then Louis released Burr's hand, and turning, without another word, vanished into the darkness.

General Montgomery, charmed with the daring of young Burr, which had made his mission so successful, at once conferred upon him the rank of Captain and assigned him a place on his own staff.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPREGNABLE QUEBEC

THE moon's rays fell upon the grass-covered Plains of Abraham. It was the night of a past beautiful day in the month of May, 1776. Twenty years before, the same moon had looked down upon the same field, at that time drenched with the blood of mortal foes; for the French under Montcalm and the English under Wolfe had met there in deadly strife. The close of that day of battle had witnessed the death of the vanquished Montcalm and of the victorious Wolfe.

Less than six months before, a small band of Americans, rebels against their king, had besieged the city and had attempted to take it by storm. They had been repulsed with terrible loss, their gallant commander, Montgomery, having fallen at the head of his troops. Gen. Benedict Arnold had maintained the siege until a successful issue became hopeless. He had then abandoned it and retreated with his army to Montreal, about one hundred and twenty miles distant.

What had brought about the enforced retreat of the Americans was the arrival of Gen. Sir Guy Carleton, with reinforcements for the relief of the beleaguered city. Against this force, strongly entrenched, the Americans could not hope to prevail, and that is why the blood-red flag of

England, emblazoned with the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George, still waved proudly over the citadel of impregnable Quebec.

On the same night that old England's flag was floating in the breeze at Quebec, the ensigns of the rebellious Colonies floated over its sister city of Montreal.

The face of the publican who owned the well-known tavern called King George's Arms, was beaming with smiles. He was a typical beef-eating Englishman. His large, round face was flushed with the combined hues of health and that derived from a use of his own stimulants. A tavern-keeper cares more for profit than for glory, and the large attendance at the Arms indicated that his coffers would be well filled before the hour of closing came.

His patrons were principally, in fact, almost wholly, American soldiers belonging to the victorious army which had conquered the city and still retained possession of it. The loyal residents of the city, who had formerly frequented the tavern, now absented themselves, for they did not care to be brought into close relations with their captors.

So far as dress was concerned, the assemblage was a motley one. The most attractive uniform ever devised, that of the old Continentals, was not yet in use, and the costumes varied from ordinary ones of homespun and linsey-woolsey to those of a more military cut and color.

The old-fashioned clock had just struck the hour of eight. An hour remained for the partaking of good cheer and engaging in convivial

conversation. The company numbered nearly a hundred, but they were divided into small parties of from five to ten, each busily engaged in the discussion of, to it, a most important question.

Suddenly a voice was heard rising so high above the rest that the general hum of conversation ceased and all listened to hear the next words of the speaker.

"I say it," he cried, "and I'm ready to back up my words agin one or two on yer, that Aaron Burr is the bravest soldier that ever trod shoe leather. That's my proposition. If any one on yer kin sarcumvent it, let him come ahead, but before he begins, let's licker." At this general invitation, there was a rush for the bar, and the publican and his two sons were kept busily employed until the almost insatiate thirst of the disputants had been satisfied. Then a tall, heavily-bearded soldier, who belonged to a New York regiment, turned to the first speaker and said:

"You have stated a proposition, to be sure, but you have said nothing to prove the truth of it. Who is this Burr you are talking about?"

The first speaker stepped back and eyed his questioner from head to foot. "Guess yer warn't at Quebec, jedgin' from the way yer talk."

"No," said the New Yorker, "I'm a new recruit, and that is why I ask you who this Burr is. I never heard of him."

"Well, yer've put the question in a polite manner and yer've given good reasons fer yer ignorance, and so I'm inclined ter satisfy yer curiosity." The speaker was Abiel Budlong of Litchfield, Connecticut.

"Well, yer see," said he, "Aaron Burr and me lived in the same town down in Connecticut. They call it the land of steady habits, so I guess it won't do for any of us to go down there to-night. As soon as Burr and me heerd that there was fightin' goin' on up in Massachusetts, we jest shouldered our muskets and started for Cambridge. When we got there we found everything topsy-turvy. There were full as many gin'ral's as there were privates, and yer couldn't tell tother from which, the way they was dressed. Jest when George — I mean Gin'ral Washington — was gittin' things inter shape, Burr and me heerd that that old dare-devil, Arnold, who had driven the British out of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, was goin' up ter Quebec, and Burr and me jest made up our minds to jine him.

"The little feller was only a little over nineteen years old, but he was sprier than a cricket and as strong as a lion. I never saw a man git along on so little food as he did. Why, he would make a meal offen nothin' and give what was left to the rest of the boys. We had a mighty hard time of it gittin' through the woods and round the portages, but I won't take up your time with that. Yer don't want to know what we did, but what Burr did. If my story gits dry and begins to affect yer, jest speak up, and we'll lick'er agin."

There were general signs of dryness in different parts of the room and once more the publican and his sons ministered to the wants of their thirsty guests. As he paid the score, Abe turned to the company and said:

“Well, I’m about dead broke now. If yer gits dry agin, some other feller’ll have ter be banker. That’s one good thing about Burr—he never drinks.” This sally drew a good-natured laugh from the company. “And he don’t eat much, nuther. I never seen a man live on so little as he kin, as I said afore. Didn’t he play a good joke on me one night? We hadn’t had anything ter eat for nigh onto two days, and I felt as though the two sides of my stummick had growed together. That night, Burr says to me: ‘Come and take supper with me to-night, Abe. I’m goin’ to have some soup.’ Well, yer bet I didn’t refuse. It was the sorriest lookin’ mess yer ever laid eyes on. It looked more like muddy water than anything else. It tasted jest about as nice. I asked Burr what it was and he told me he had made it out of a pair of old shoes and part of a surcingle. Well, ’twas better than nothin’, and that ain’t sayin’ much.”

“You didn’t do much fighting, then?” broke in the New Yorker.

“Oh, I’m comin’ ter that,” Abe replied. “When we got to the Plains of Abraham we made ready to take the city by storm. Burr had his plans all laid out. He got a detail of forty men and he jest drilled them fellers so they could stand a ladder up on end, run up one side and come down t’other afore the ladder tipped over. I’ve seen ’em do it lots of times.”

A general expression of doubt arose from the company. “May I be hung for a liar if it wasn’t so!” cried Abe.

A confused murmur of voices prevented, for

several moments, the continuance of his story. Suddenly, a soldier, who had been talking to the publican, approached Abe, bearing a small coil of rope in his hand, and said :

“ Here, Budlong, go hang yerself.”

“ Oh, that’s all right !” cried Abe. “ I jest want ter say here that I kin fight as well as talk. If any on yer doubts it, now’s the time and place ter settle it.”

“ Oh, go on !” cried the New Yorker. “ We don’t want to fight with you. We want to know what Burr did.”

“ Well,” said Abe, resuming his usual method of delivery, “ they sot down on Burr’s plan of capturin’ the city and went at it their own way, and they got licked. Montgomery was killed, Arnold got hit in the leg, and Morgan and his men got a good thrashin’. Burr was right up side of Montgomery when he was struck, and although he was a little feller and the Gin’ral weighted more than two hundred, Little Burr jest took him up on his back and toted him out of reach of the British.

“ But I forgot ter tell yer, that afore the fight had begun at all, Gin’ral Arnold sent Burr from Quebec ter Montreal, ter have Gin’ral Montgomery come and help him. Little Burr got here all right and the Gin’ral was so tickled with him that he made him a Cap’n and put him on his staff. Now, yer all know he’s Brigade-Major, and he’s jest runnin’ this city, which gives Gin’ral Arnold plenty of time ter go visitin’ the Montreal big-bugs, and I must own up that some of these Montreal girls are jest as pretty as some of our ornary lookin’ ones down in Connecticut.”

During this conversation the minute hand of the old clock had made a complete circuit, the hour of nine had been struck, and the minute hand was half upon its way towards the hour of ten. Both the publican and his patrons seemed oblivious to the fact that a stern military rule had been disobeyed, and that the tavern should have been closed half an hour before. Suddenly the door opened and an officer entered, followed by a file of soldiers. As the eyes of the delinquents fell upon him, there came from their lips, as with one voice, the words — "Little Burr!"

Yes, it was he — General Arnold's Brigade-Major and his right-hand man. In appearance he seemed a mere boy, as he stood there, sword in hand, but there was upon his beardless face a look of determination which boded ill for the publican who was looking at the clock's face in dismay.

"Come here!" said Major Burr, and the publican approached him in a suppliant manner. "You know the rules in regard to taverns?" asked Burr. The publican bowed, and a faint, "Yes, your Honor," fell from his lips. "Why did you not obey them, then?" was the next question. "I have, up to to-night, your Honor," the publican went on, "but this was a particular occasion. One of the soldiers here was telling how you carried off the body of General Montgomery after he was killed at Quebec, and how you got by the English soldiers when you came here for reinforcements, and how he thought you would have taken Quebec if they had let you have your own way, and ——"

"That will do," cried Major Burr. "Don't let

this occur again, sir. If it does, I will close up your tavern and send you outside the lines. Arrest that man!" said Burr, pointing to Budlong. "I have no doubt he is the one who has caused this disobedience of military orders."

The astonished Abe was taken into custody by two soldiers. The three marched out, the remainder of the guard tramping behind them, while Burr brought up the rear. The other soldiers, who were grouped together at the farther end of the room, were regarding him attentively. As he reached the door, he turned about, and facing them, made a military salute. Then he turned quickly and left the room, while loud cheers burst from those who had been the recipients of this courtesy.

Ten minutes later they had wended their ways to their respective quarters, and King George's Arms was shrouded in darkness.

CHAPTER IX

A CONFLICT OF AUTHORITY

IT was true, as Abe Budlong had said, that Brigade-Major Burr was running the town. Gen. Benedict Arnold, although a very fiend incarnate in battle, was exactly the reverse in times of peace. It was then that he enjoyed good dinners, good wine, and good company, and he was more than willing to have the arduous duties connected with the garrisoning of the city devolve upon his faithful and energetic Brigade-Major.

But Little Burr was not satisfied to remain as Arnold's aide and perform subordinate duties. He was fired with a laudable ambition to win glory in the field, and if this glory were to be won he must go where fighting was going on. He stated his intention of leaving the army at Montreal and returning to New York, but his superior officer refused his consent.

"I command you to remain at your post," said he to Major Burr.

"You have no right to command me," the latter replied. "I do not belong to the line. I was a volunteer in your expedition to Quebec, and as that expedition was unsuccessful, I am not obliged to remain any longer."

"But you are my Brigade-Major and I cannot get along without you."



Arnold ordering Burr ashore.

“Come back here, or I’ll have you shot for disobedience of orders.”

"There are many others who will be glad to fill my place," Burr replied. "I have obtained a boat and shall leave to-morrow morning with four other volunteers, including my friend Abe Budlong."

"We will see about that," cried Arnold, in an angry mood. "I am not used to having my orders disobeyed."

"And I," replied Burr, "am not used to obeying orders when they come from one who has no right to command me."

The next morning, Major Burr, with Abe Budlong and three others, entered a boat; they were preparing to push off from the shore when General Arnold appeared. Shaking his fist at Burr, he cried:

"Come back here, or I'll have you shot for disobedience of orders!"

Burr examined the priming of his pistol. "I certainly shall not fire at you, General, unless you fire at me, but the moment you fire, I shall do the same." For an instant these two resolute and intrepid men gazed at each other. Burr broke the silence by saying: "Push off, Abe," and an instant later the boat was ten feet from the shore.

Again Arnold's anger overmastered him. "I will report your disobedience to the Commander-in-Chief, and when you are sent back to me, we will see who is the master." "It will be plenty of time to settle the question then," was Burr's reply. "The day may come, General, when I may have the right to give you orders. If it does, I will see that you obey them."

Arnold turned upon his heel and walked towards his quarters, inwardly fuming and chafing, for he knew that he had no right to command Burr to remain with him, and he also knew that a request to have his efficient Brigade-Major sent back to him would not be likely to be complied with by the Commander-in-Chief.

A short distance down the river a man was seen upon the bank, wildly gesticulating for Burr and his companions to approach the shore. In the olden days, if any one possessed a conveyance of any sort in which there was a spare seat, a passenger, with or without means, was always welcome. When within hailing distance the man cried out that he was a trader and wished to return to Three Rivers; that he had missed the boat upon which he intended to take passage. There was plenty of room in Burr's boat; the trader soon became an occupant and the voyage was at once resumed.

Several hours later they came in sight of a large house, standing near the bank of the river, in front of which was gathered a band of Indians. They were in their war paint and their fierce aspect filled the weak-kneed trader with alarm. Disregarding Burr's authority, he turned to the men who were rowing, and cried:

"Row over to the other shore and get by those fellows as quickly as you can."

The men looked towards Burr. A slight smile passed over his face, then he nodded. The boat was turned towards the opposite shore, which was soon neared. Then Burr spoke for the first time since the trader had given his order to the rowers.

"Go ashore, sir!" he cried.

"What do you mean?" asked the man. "Do you mean to leave me here in the wilderness to be killed by Indians or eaten up by wild beasts?"

"No," said Burr, calmly, "but I judge from the order that you gave to my oarsmen that you wish to go ashore, and now it is my wish, nay, it is my command, that you do go, and stay there until I am ready to take you aboard again. I will not desert you, for I do not consider you fit prey for either brave Indians or equally brave wild beasts."

This speech caused the soldiers to laugh, and the discomfited trader, forced to jump into two feet of water, reached the shore in a bedraggled condition. The boat was again turned and soon reached the little wharf before the house where the Indians had been seen. Drawing his sword, Burr stepped ashore and walked up to the house. The Indians approached him and a conversation ensued, during which Burr ascertained that the savages were friendly. They accompanied him to the little wharf and were introduced to the soldiers. Burr gave them a small keg of rum which formed part of the boat's outfit. He then entered the boat which pulled away and resumed its course down the river. They had not proceeded far, when a shrill cry was heard from behind. All turned their heads and the trader was seen running at full speed along the bank of the river, evidently impressed with the idea that Burr had finally decided to leave him behind. Burr broke into a loud laugh and directed his men to row to the opposite shore; when they reached it he said:

“If you come aboard again, who is to be considered in command of this boat?”

“You are, Major Burr,” replied the trader, humbly.

He soon occupied his former seat and until the boat reached Three Rivers he did not once look at Burr, nor did a single word escape his lips.

CHAPTER X

A FAIR COMPANION

AT the end of the boat journey, horses were procured and the little company of five continued its way towards Albany. Arrived there, several days were spent in visiting points of interest in the town, and in the purchase of horses and supplies necessary for the long trip to New York.

Burr, while in Montreal, had received a letter from his bosom friend, Matthias Ogden, and had inferred from its contents that Ogden would meet him at Albany and accompany him during the remainder of his journey. He was, however, to be deprived of a pleasure upon which he had counted much, for he found a letter from Ogden, in which the latter told him that it would be impossible for him to reach Albany until three weeks later.

But if Burr was thus to be deprived of a *compagnon de voyage*, in whose society he would have experienced great pleasure, kind Fate had provided another for him. Upon receiving his friend's letter, Burr determined to return immediately to the field of active service. Not only was he desirous of doing so, but his four companions were anxious to join the main army at New York and do what they could to repel the British.

It happened that at this time Adelaide Clifton was on a visit to her relatives in Albany. The

breaking out of the Revolution had found her there, and the hostile disposition of the Indians had prevented her from attempting to return. Learning that Major Burr, accompanied by some discharged soldiers, was about to leave Albany for New York, she eagerly availed herself of this opportunity for returning to her home. Just eighteen years of age, beautiful as Helen when she first listened to the impassioned words of Menelaus, enriched by many accomplishments, and possessed of an intellect to which the term genius most properly applies, it would have been natural enough for the young soldier to have surrendered heart and mind to the lovely being under his charge. That he did not, may be attributed particularly to the absence of that inexplicable sympathy that all of us have felt and none of us are able to describe; and more particularly to the fact that his country had just entered upon a war of uncertain duration and equally uncertain results. The next year, or the next month, according to the chances of battle, might crown him a victor or condemn him to a rebel's doom. At such a time his thoughts were upon battlefields, not bridal raptures; upon iron chains, not silken fetters. The hoarse drum and the piercing fife echoed in his ears; not the soft lute or the songs of love. The spell of beauty was counteracted by the inspiration of patriotism, and the presence of his fair companion awakened no emotion stronger than friendship.

The journey was southward and was made as rapidly as possible. Over fairly good roads, when reached, their progress was rapid; but when

obliged to follow bridle paths through the forest, they went in Indian file — Burr in advance, Miss Clifton next, then Abe Budlong, with the three soldiers bringing up the rear. This order of march had been devised by Burr, for he knew, in case of danger, that he could rely implicitly upon Abe's assistance. On one occasion, the latter had remarked in an undertone to Burr:

“I say, Aaron, that Miss Clifton is a mighty bright, pretty girl. Cause she lived in New York, I at fust thought she must be a New Yorker, and I kind o' wondered; but it's all out, now. She told me yesterday, as I was ridin' long side o' her, that she was born in Connecticut, and I told her I was a Connecticut boy myself, and hers to serve.”

Burr selected the most suitable places for camping at night. A small shelter-tent had been purchased by him in Albany when it had been decided that Miss Clifton was to accompany the party, and this protection was devoted exclusively to her use. On stormy days, when progress was rendered inconvenient, and sometimes impossible, Burr and Abe cut down striplings, and building a framework over the tent, covered it with boughs and leaves, and in this way afforded its fair occupant additional protection from the storm. Burr and his companions would have laughed at the idea of their seeking shelter; they were to be soldiers in the army of their country and the little privations to which they were subjected during this voyage were probably but trifles compared with those they would be called upon to undergo when in actual service.

"I hope we shall find a pleasant place in which to pitch our camp to-morrow," said Miss Clifton, one afternoon. They were evidently approaching a clearing, for the bridle-path had widened; and urging her horse forward, she rode side by side with her escort. Not fully comprehending her meaning, Burr replied:

"I hope we shall have a pleasant day to travel, because it will bring us so much nearer to our destination, to which, no doubt, you look forward as eagerly as I do."

"Why, Major Burr!" cried the young girl, as she turned her face with a look of astonishment towards him. "You surely do not mean to travel to-morrow?"

"Why not?" asked Burr, for the meaning of her remark had not yet become apparent to him.

"What day of the week is this?" she asked, with an arch look in her face.

"If my reckoning is correct," was the reply, "it is Saturday."

"Yes," said the young girl, "and to-morrow will be Sunday. You will pardon me, I know, Major Burr, but I have always been taught that God's temple is in the woods as well as in the city, and that He can be worshiped in the open air, beneath the sun and sky, as well as in a church."

Burr, quickly perceiving the young girl's meaning, determined to accede to her implied wish.

As he anticipated, the widened bridle-path did lead to a clearing, and here it was decided to pitch camp for the night, although they would naturally have gone on for some time longer and then selected the most desirable place.

Contrary to his expectations, the three soldiers made no objection to the proposed delay, but one of them suggested, that if Sunday night should have a moon, it might be well for them to push on and make up, to some extent, for the time lost on Sunday. Burr said that he would consider the matter and there it was left.

The three soldiers certainly did not observe Sunday in the manner which Miss Clifton had contemplated. They were well supplied with rum and tobacco, and a pack of cards, and were evidently disposed to make the day one of rest and relaxation, from their point of view. Abe refused to join the party, despite the numerous requests. He knew that such a course would be looked upon with disfavor by Burr. Besides, Miss Clifton was a Connecticut girl and he wished her to have as high an opinion as possible of the only Connecticut boy in the party.

About noon, Burr said: "Miss Clifton, I recall your remark of yesterday about God's temple being in the woods. It evidently is not located in this clearing; perhaps we can find it, if we go far enough." So they set off on foot together. The sun was bright, but its rays were tempered by a cool breeze; this became balmy under the combined influence of the sun's warmth and the perfume of the wild flowers, seen in profusion on every side.

"How I wish," cried the young girl, "that I could live in an Eden like this for the rest of my life! I never did like the city, with its narrow streets and houses crowded so closely together.

How pure the air is, and how freely one can breathe! It gives one new ideas and new thoughts, does it not, Major Burr?"

"You will pardon me, Miss Clifton, if I reply that I have but one thought in my mind. Shall I tell you what it is?"

A girl more deeply versed in the ways of the world than was Adelaide Clifton might have thought that his remark was intended to lead the way to a compliment to herself, but Adelaide was an honest, whole-souled girl, and she replied quickly:

"Certainly, Major Burr. I should like to know your thought, for it must be a great and noble one."

"It is," said he, "from an ideal point of view. I was thinking of the coming conflict between these Colonies and the powerful mother country. What will be the result? Can we successfully meet and defeat the stronger troops and experienced generals that she will send against us? If the war had not opened, but, instead, we were looking forward to it as a possibility within the next five years, I would give all my time to preparing my countrymen for the conflict. I would go from colony to colony and urge the establishment of military schools for the education of officers, and make provision for the drilling of the common soldiers. Undrilled, the soldiers are like pickets stuck loosely in the soil; when drilled, they become the thick hedge, fully capable of repelling assault." As he spoke, his whole frame swelled with the intensity of his feelings, his eyes threw

forth a fire which had been latent, and his voice, which before had been pitched in a conversational tone, now became loud and resonant.

In turn the girl's eyes sparkled with pride. This young soldier was her *beau ideal* of all men. She had never met one before with such innate power, with such firm resolves, with such determination of purpose to win a name and fame on the battlefield.

Men's patriotism may find strength from other sources than the love of women, but its flow is sustained by their sympathy and encouragement.

"Major Burr," Miss Clifton cried, "I am a prophetess, and I predict that you will win glory in the coming war! I may not know you then" — as she said this, her voice grew lower, and trembled slightly — "so I will anticipate those fair ladies who will praise you one of these days by crowning you as a conqueror to-day!"

She began gathering leaves and wild flowers. Burr threw himself at the trunk of a tree and watched her agile motions with interest. He may be pardoned for thinking to himself that she was both beautiful and intellectual, but some fair reader may not pardon him for not having thoughts of a deeper and more permanent nature.

Soon Miss Clifton ran towards him, bearing in her hands a wreath which she had deftly woven from the leaves and flowers. "Most *puissant* General," said she, in mock heroic style, "remove your *chapeau*, that I may place upon your brow this wreath of laurel."

"Fair lady," said Burr, "I kneel to receive thy

gracious favor," and he sank upon one knee while Miss Clifton placed the wreath upon his head. They went onward, she, admiring the beauties of nature and voicing her pleasure from time to time in enthusiastic language.

Suddenly the path ended and there arose before them a precipitous ascent of broken stone, which fancy might have called a natural staircase. "Shall we go up?" asked Burr. They both looked upward and saw that the steep acclivity terminated in a huge rocky boulder. "Yes," cried Miss Clifton, "the view from the top will surely pay for the trouble of getting up there." They slowly ascended, Burr's arm being occasionally needed to support his fair companion when a longer step than usual became necessary. At last they reached the top and were well repaid for their endeavors.

The view was a charming one, and Miss Clifton was in raptures. They walked to the edge of the boulder and looked down. The distance in a perpendicular line was about thirty feet, which brought the tops of the trees nearly on a level with the boulder. One of the taller trees overhung the rock and one of its strongest branches reached across the intervening distance and rested upon it. Burr, who had the agility and clear-headedness of a gymnast, walked out upon this branch until he reached the trunk of the tree. Miss Clifton fell into a state of pretty dismay and begged him entreatingly to come back from his dangerous position; but he, for the time being, was willful. He might have wished to learn the

real extent of her feelings; at any rate, he reached up his arm and catching at a branch above him, drew himself up, and sat down upon it.

At that moment a loud shriek fell upon his ear. It came from a woman, and must have been Adelaide's voice. Quick as lightning he dropped from the upper branch and regained his footing upon the one beneath. Then he turned to see what had caused the outcry. He saw what he had not noticed before — that the boulder was the end of a rocky ridge. Some fifty feet down was an opening in the rock, undoubtedly a cave. From this cave the head of a bear had emerged, and the animal was moving slowly towards Miss Clifton. Her cry was explained and her immediate danger was obvious.

What should he do? If he rejoined her, and they attempted to descend the rocky pathway, they would surely be overtaken by the bear. No, there was only one way to secure her safety — she must join him on the tree. Then the thought occurred to him that this branch rested upon the boulder and might be strong enough to support the bear, which would surely follow them. He decided quickly that such an exigency must be met when it came. How foolish it had been for him to leave camp without his rifle or pistols! He had not even brought his knife with him, which could have been used as a last resort. He had thought of taking his weapons, but then it had occurred to him that Miss Clifton might consider them inappropriate on such an occasion, and he had anticipated no danger from either human being or wild beast.

"Miss Clifton," he cried, "come out here on the bough. You will be safe then."

The girl was evidently paralyzed with fear, and stood as though stupefied. The bear had not accelerated its pace, but shambled slowly along. There was not more than a minute to spare. "Adelaide, come!" cried Burr. Her Christian name, spoken by the young soldier, acted like a magnet. With a glad cry she started towards the place where the bough rested upon the boulder.

"Steady, Adelaide, be the brave girl I know you are." As he said this he extended both his hands, and the young girl, thus encouraged, held out hers, and they were soon in his strong grasp. He walked backward and she forward, until the trunk of the tree was reached. Then, fearing that she might faint from the nervous reaction, he threw his arms about her and held her close to him.

When the bear saw its intended victim, for, no doubt, he had seen her through the opening of his lair, he bounded forward as fast as he could propel his heavy body, and snarled with rage when he discovered that she had escaped him. He was evidently an acute animal. He did not intend to give up the pursuit. He could see his victims not more than ten feet from him and there seemed to be a natural pathway leading to them. He walked to the end of the bough which rested on the boulder, and putting out one of his clumsy paws, tested its rigidity. His instinct hardly went so far as to determine the possibility of its sustaining his weight.

Burr reflected that, if he were alone, his escape would be easy; all that would be necessary to do would be to descend the tree and, upon reaching the ground, run for the camp at his greatest speed. The bear would hardly be likely to make a downward jump of thirty feet, in order to follow him. But he realized that it would be impossible for his companion to descend the tree without positive danger. He looked upward to see if there was a means of escape in that way. He could easily have ascended the tree to its topmost branch and been out of danger, but how could he manage to so assist Miss Clifton that she could reach a similar position?

The bear was wary. It was evidently not entirely satisfied with the means of passage afforded by the bough of the tree. Perhaps it thought it had plenty of time; its victims could not escape, and it would look around and see if there was not an easier and more secure way of reaching them. It walked to the edge of the boulder. It was a huge beast, but, as it stood there, to the eyes of its probable victims it seemed twice its natural size, and Miss Clifton, with a cry of fear, covered her face with her hands.

"Be brave, Adelaide," said Burr; "while there is life there is hope. I propose to eat that bear, instead of being eaten by him, before this affair is over."

The report of a rifle rang out upon the air. The bear gave a yell, as though in pain. Burr looked and saw a stream of blood coming from its shoulder; it had been wounded, but not mortally.

The thought came at once to his mind that the shot had been fired by one of his party — probably Abe, who, becoming anxious on account of their long absence, had followed them. He was on the point of calling out “Abe!” and disclosing their hiding place, but was restrained by an inexplicable feeling that such a course would be premature. It was well that he refrained. Hardly had he come to this conclusion, which it had not taken more than twenty seconds to form, when a second report was heard. This shot was a deadly one, for the bear, with another scream of pain, started in the direction of his cave. He had proceeded but a short distance, however, when he tumbled over, and fell, an inert mass, on the blood-stained rock. Looking to the other side of the trunk of the tree, Burr discovered that an equally strong bough projected at the same level. If they could reach it, they would be screened from view. If friends were coming, they could easily disclose themselves; if enemies, they might escape detection.

The change in position was safely made and Burr drew down some smaller branches in such a way as to screen them from view. Fortunately, Miss Clifton’s riding habit was of dark green cloth, which, under the circumstances, was a great advantage. Telling her to hold firmly to a small branch, he peered through the leaves to see what was to be the outcome of this strange and unexpected adventure.

Suddenly voices were heard. They were loud but guttural, and Burr divined at once that those who had fired the shots were Indians. His sur-

mise soon proved correct, for two lusty savages, with the smoke still issuing from their rifles, who had been ascending the rocky acclivity, reached the broad boulder and surveyed with grunts of satisfaction their dead prey. Placing their rifles upon the rock, they drew their knives and began to remove the heavy coat of fur from their victim. It was evidently in their minds that it would protect them from the cold during the coming winter.

The situation, instead of being improved, Burr felt, was growing more serious. His own strength was in no way diminished, but he was afraid that his companion's might give out at any moment, and she might be unable to longer sustain herself in the cramped position which she was obliged to assume. With this thought in his mind he threw one of his arms about her and whispered encouraging words in her ear.

"Be brave a little while longer," he said. "We shall have some of that bear for supper, after all."

The change in his position brought to his view again the entrance to the cave from which the bear had emerged. What was that? It was the she-bear, who, missing her companion and who, perhaps, hearing the shots, was coming forth to investigate on her own account. The Indians were upon their knees, busily engaged upon the carcass. Burr knew that they had failed to reload their rifles, and if the she-bear set upon them they had only their knives to defend themselves. His first impulse was one of humanity—to cry out and warn the Indians of their danger—but self-

preservation is the strongest of all feelings, and Burr checked the shout of warning which he was upon the point of uttering. Glancing through the interstices of his leafy screen, he waited the coming mortal combat, for such he knew it would prove to be.

He had not long to wait. The she-bear had divined the fact that her mate was dead; she had sniffed blood, and probably bears recognize danger to their own species as readily as does man to his. With long but almost noiseless bounds she covered the short distance between the cave and the rocky boulder, and sprang between the two Indians, who had no intimation of her presence. Bringing a huge paw down upon the head of one, she crushed him to the earth, while the next instant she fastened her teeth in the neck of the other. The onslaught placed both of her victims immediately at her mercy, but she had none. They were unable to use their knives, their only weapons of defence, and in a few moments their dead bodies were stretched across that of their own victim.

Two deadly dangers had been removed, but a third and terrible one still remained. Their chances of escape were in no way improved, for the infuriated she-bear was an even more formidable adversary than her mate had been. Burr reflected that possibly the Indians might have been friendly, but it was too late now to repine at not having taken steps to ascertain this fact.

The sun was slowly sinking in the west and its reflected radiance threw a shower of golden rays

upon the forest. Turning to Miss Clifton, Burr said:

"We are safe for the present, at least; there has been a remarkable occurrence. The two Indians who killed the bear have been killed in turn by the she-bear. Our friends will surely come for us, but there is, of course, a chance that they may take the wrong direction and may not find us for some time. The she-bear will not leave the body of her dead mate for hours, so our retreat in that direction is cut off. We must try to get from this tree to another and then to a third, and endeavor in some way to reach the ground without attracting her attention."

But this course was destined to become unnecessary. As hour after hour sped away, Abe Budlong had become nervous and apprehensive for the safety of his friend Aaron and that pretty girl who was born in Connecticut.

"I say, boys," said he, "I'm afraid somethin' has happened ter the Major. He didn't take his gun or his pistols with him, and I'm afraid he's got inter trouble. He'd get out all right if he was alone, but with that gal on his hands he'd be kind o' hampered. I think we ought ter go and look him up."

The men had tired of their card-playing and had slept off the effect of their long and strong potations of rum. They were just in the mood for an adventure of some kind, and grasping their rifles, willingly followed Abe's lead into the forest. They covered the ground quickly, for they were all strong men and used to making their way through

the woods. Before they reached the rocky acclivity Abe's quick eye discovered footprints and other signs that they were on the right track of the parties of whom they were in search.

"It's all right, boys!" he cried. "They came this way."

"Well, I'll wager a shilling," said one of the men, "that they never went up those rocks."

"Well, I'll bet they did!" cried Abe. "They had ter do that or force their way right through the forest, and I don't believe the Major would have tried ter do that, with a gal on his hands. Besides, that gal came from Connecticut, and she just stumped the Major to climb up there and find out what they could see when they got ter the top. Come along, boys, it won't do any harm ter go up, anyway. If we find we're on the wrong scent, we'll come back agin."

Abe started ahead, followed by his three companions. When half way up he stopped and emitted a low whistle. "Jerusalem crickets!" he said in a whisper. "Did ye see that?"

The men, who had been intent upon finding the most secure places upon which to put their feet, had been looking downward rather than ahead. As Abe spoke, however, they all looked up and saw the same picture upon which Burr's eyes at the same moment were resting.

"I wish," said Abe, "that that 'ere b'ar was the hull British army. We'd clean 'em out at one shot, jest as we're goin' ter settle him. Now, boys, we each one of us know best where ter hit a b'ar. When we take out them 'ere bullets, I don't want ter find 'em more'n an inch apart."

The men secured steady footing and raised their rifles. The four reports were as one — instantaneous — and equally sudden was the death of the she-bear, which fell prostrate upon the dead bodies beneath her. With yells of delight the four men rushed forward, tripping and stumbling, but regaining their footing and dashing forward again, until all of them reached the top of the rocky boulder.

“Well, by gum!” cried Abe. “If I warn’t a member of a religious family and not used ter indulgin’ in profane language, I should say there had been a h—l of a time up here.”

At that moment, a loud and well-known voice cried out:

“Hello, Abe!”

As Burr uttered the words, he pushed aside the screen and his face came into full view. Abe started back. What he thought, no one will ever know; all he said was:

“Boys, there’s the Major!” Then he added, “But where’s the gal?”

Abe stepped out upon the bough over which Burr and Miss Clifton had made their escape, and extending his hands assisted them in reaching the boulder in safety.

“It’s not a very pleasant sight for a lady,” apologized Abe, “but you’re a Connecticut gal and I guess you can stand it. I kind o’ reckon that the two Indyuns killed the fust b’ar, then the second b’ar killed the two Indyuns, and then a detachment of the Colonial army killed the second b’ar and rescued Major Burr and Miss Clifton.”

"You have got it just right, Abe," said Burr. "You could not have described the events any better if you had been an eye-witness, as we have been. But let us get back to camp as soon as possible. There may be other dangers in store for us if we remain here any longer. But, a word of caution,—those dead Indians would not have lost their lives if they had not been careless. After bringing down their game they failed to reload their rifles."

"'Nuff," said Abe, and he proceeded to reload, his example being followed by his three companions.

"If you will supply me with ammunition," said Burr, "I think we will take possession of these two very good rifles, formerly owned by our Indian friends, and load them also." This was soon done.

"Now," said Burr, "I made a promise to Miss Clifton. I should like to keep it. I promised her a bear steak for supper."

"She shall have it," cried Abe. "And, boys, we'll have roasted b'ar's feet; there ain't nothin' finer in the way of meat in the world."

A bright moon lighted up the last part of their homeward trip. The steak was cooked over some hot coals, while the feet were roasted in a hole in the ground in which hot coals had first been placed. Then they were removed, the feet put in and covered with sod.

After a day of terrible adventure, which might have ended in the death of two of their party, the company became happy, and some of its members even hilarious.

At eight o'clock Burr remembered the promise that had been made to the soldiers; camp was struck and the party resumed its journey southward.

When they reached West Point, Burr decided that they would make the rest of the journey by water. Miss Clifton had borne up remarkably well with the fatigues of the journey, but during the two days which preceded their arrival at West Point, a heavy rain storm had prevailed and, despite their best endeavors, all the members of the party were thoroughly drenched and, necessarily, suffered somewhat. The horses were sold and a boat purchased in which to complete the trip. In it their remaining stores were packed away, and on a bright, sunny morning, they pushed off from shore and started on their way down stream.

Burr and his five companions did not meet with any exciting adventures during their passage down the Hudson. Both days and nights were pleasant. No storms roughened the river, the surface of which was as smooth as a mill-pond. Some nights were passed in the boat and some on land. They were all anxious to reach New York, and as long as their strength would permit, the oars were plied by sturdy arms. It was only when their tired limbs needed repose, that the boat was allowed to drift slowly along with a watcher at the bow, or was rowed into some little cove, where a big fire was started, the shelter-tent set up, and a camp improvised for a night's stay on land.

New York was finally reached. Burr's first duty was, of course, to escort Miss Clifton to the

home of her aunt, Mistress von Ketterer, the widow of a Dutch merchant, who had made a fortune and left it to his wife, a comely person, about forty years of age. She lived in an old-fashioned Dutch house, built in the center of a large garden, and was, in face, form, and voice, a Knickerbocker of the old school. He was thanked over and over again by the kind-hearted lady for his attention and courtesy to her niece, and accepted an invitation, warmly extended by both to call upon them.

Soon after his arrival he received another letter from his friend, Col. Matthias Ogden, informing him that General Washington was ready to give Major Burr an assignment as aide on his staff and make him a member of his official family.

CHAPTER XI

AN OLD NEW YORK GARDEN

MADAM von Ketterer was delighted with Adelaide's presence and insisted that she should remain with her permanently.

"I am very lonesome," said her aunt. "Your uncle Jacob died about five years ago. He was an old man and very infirm, but he retained his intellect to the last, and he was such good company, my dear. I used to read to him and there was hardly a book that he could not tell me something which would have added to its value, if the author had but known of it. He had a college education in Holland before he came to America, and he was always a great reader."

Adelaide Clifton's father and mother were both dead. She had made her home with a married sister, who lived in Connecticut. Her presence in Montreal had been occasioned by a visit to another married sister, who was the wife of a British officer. Adelaide would not assent, at once, to her aunt's request; but after she had been in the old mansion for a week, it seemed more like home to her than any place in which she had ever lived.

The house had many large rooms, some of them very large, and also many small ones. In one of the larger, Adelaide one day found a secret

panel; on opening it, she discovered, to her astonishment, a flight of stairs. With the impetuosity of youth, she ran swiftly up, despite the fact that it was covered with dust and swayed perceptibly beneath her weight.

Opening a small door at the head of the stairs, she entered and found herself in a large room. From floor to ceiling the walls were covered with shelves, and these shelves were packed closely with books. The only furniture in the room consisted of a number of comfortable, old-fashioned rocking-chairs and a large mahogany table, beautifully carved and resting upon four lion's feet. "That must have been Uncle Jacob's library," she said to herself, as she slowly retraced her steps and replaced the panel.

Her curiosity had been whetted, not satisfied, by her discovery. The next day she said to her aunt:

"You told me that Uncle Jacob was a great reader. What has become of all his books? Did you sell them?"

"No, child," was Madam von Ketterer's reply, and she looked inquiringly into Adelaide's face, to which a telltale blush quickly mounted. I have had no one to read to me," her aunt continued, "since Jacob died. I have given all my time to the management of my house and my servants. But some day, Adelaide, we will go up there and you shall read to me," she added, demurely. "Any time you wish to go there alone, I shall be pleased to have you, and you can pick out something to read to me when I have the time to listen."

Adelaide knew that her aunt had divined her secret, but she said nothing, and taking her hat from its peg, ran out into the old garden, which, although ablaze with the noonday sun, yet had many cool corners which frustrated all the efforts of the heated beams of light to enter them.

Adelaide took refuge in one of these cool retreats and looked about her. An old New York garden! "It is perfectly lovely!" the girl was forced to say aloud. These words may seem strangely familiar to a reader of the present day, but it must be remembered that the language of admiration changes but little in a century.

Adelaide was very fond of horseback riding and hardly a morning passed that she did not indulge in her favorite exercise. Her beautiful face and figure quickly attracted the attention of the gallants of the city and of the young officers of the American army, then stationed there. Inquiries soon became rife as to who the young and beautiful stranger might be, and when it was discovered that she was the niece of Madam von Ketterer, the usual devices were adopted to secure an opportunity to visit the old Dutch mansion.

During Jacob von Ketterer's lifetime he had entertained lavishly and his wife was well known to what may be called the best people of the city. It is not strange, therefore, that within a few weeks after Adelaide's arrival in New York her aunt's house was frequented by many visitors, the greater proportion being young, unmarried gentlemen.

Major Aaron Burr had accepted the invitation so courteously given him by Adelaide's aunt, and

had called many times to present his compliments to the ladies; and on several occasions he had strolled through the beautiful garden with Adelaide for his companion. In their conversations they often referred to the trip from Montreal to New York, and saw over and over again the terrible conflict which had ended in the death, both of the Indians and their intended victims.

It is not strange that among the gentlemen who received invitations to visit Madam von Ketterer should have been included the young and handsome Capt. Alexander Hamilton.

His judgment was taken captive by the brilliancy of Adelaide's conversation, and his West Indian blood was turned to fire by her extraordinary beauty. The acquaintance thus formed was not permitted to languish. Every moment of relaxation from his military duties was devoted to her. Day after day he was by her side; day after day he exerted to the utmost those powers of fascination which he had, as yet, found no woman able to resist.

That she was pleased with his society and flattered by his attentions admitted of no question, and her practised wooer spared no exertion to improve the favorable position that he had gained. Quietly and artfully, he had extracted from her a knowledge of her tastes and her favorite pursuits, of the books she read, the authors she most admired, the virtues most esteemed, and the vices most abhorred. With the language of a master he touched the chords on which she had unconsciously taught him to play. The evident

pleasure and the close attention with which she listened, raised flattering hopes in his breast, and ignorant that her heart was another's, he exulted in the conviction that every hour brought him nearer to the accomplishment of his purpose.

What was his purpose? Honorable marriage? Oh, no! He had learned by diligent inquiry that she was comparatively poor, and destitute of influential friends. It did not suit his ambitious schemes to link himself, at such a time, to one who would be a clog upon his advancement; or, if not an absolute hindrance, at least incapable of pushing him up the ascent he was beginning to climb. Yet, while his ambition controlled his passion so far as to deprive it of all honorable aims, it diminished none of its fiery intensity, but served only to divert it into channels of intended dishonorable gratification.

Soon Alexander Hamilton impatiently watched for an opportunity to declare the passion that consumed him, and his very soul was burning to hear the blushing avowal of its return, which he doubted not would follow.

The opportunity he had longed for came at length, under circumstances as favorable as he could desire. The hour was twilight; the time, the dreamy month of May, when the heart is always full and the blood dances gladly through the throbbing veins. The bright moon had just risen above the horizon, bathing spire and cupola in its mellow rays, which mingled harmoniously with the hues of opening bud and blooming flower, and clothed in robes of richer beauty the green turf on which they rested.

Seated beneath a bower of fragrant flowers, Adelaide Clifton was listening with rapt attention to his eloquent words. Turning from the scenes about him, he transported her to the sea-girt isle on which his infant eyes had first opened to the light of day, and the happiest years of his life had been passed in sinless pleasures. He painted for her a picture of a clime where frosts never come, and the year knows no changes, except from the balmy spring to the glorious summer; where the green tree never sheds its leaves, and the rose that drops from its stem, scorched and withered, at noonday, is replaced before morning by another, sweeter and lovelier, that the dews of night have nourished into life; where the plumage of the birds that throng the deep woods and feast on the luscious fruits of the tropics, is variegated as the rainbow, and the rich music of their songs swells like a choral anthem from the spirit land; where the maiden slumbers by babbling fountains in gardens of perfume, until the evening shades have relieved the fiery sun, and the moon and the stars invite her forth to dream of the glorious beauties of heaven and to revel in the sensuous delights of earth.

All the pictures his memory supplied of that luxurious clime were placed before her. Nor did he pause here. He knew the power of sympathy over the female heart and gradually led his willing listener among the varied scenes that had grown familiar to him in his adventurous life. He described the sea when the tempest was unchained, and the strong bark shivered, and the stout mast

reeled and cracked at the whirlwind's breath. He told her of nights upon the trackless deep when the heavens were hung with black and not a star looked down upon the inky flood; of the wild roar of the breakers, as the doomed vessel dashed among their foamy crests; of the despairing cries of the struggling victims and the delirious joy of the fortunate few whom the waves had mercifully thrown upon the sandy beach.

The genuine pathos of his narrative was heightened by its evident truthfulness, and its influence was the more marked because he painted nothing that he had not seen, and gave voice to no emotion which he had not felt. A stray moon-beam had stolen through the trellised vines and rested on the cheek of Adelaide Clifton. By its light Hamilton saw that she was in tears — tears for his sufferings, his perils — perhaps of joy at his escape.

"How little do we know," he went on, without seeming to notice them, "the changes that are before us. Eighteen years had not darkened the down on my lip, when I exchanged the dreamy isle for the boisterous ocean. Other changes also came, and now, at an age when the boy is scarcely merged in the man, the merchant's pen is thrown aside for warrior's arms. Perhaps the next change will be my death on the battlefield. All beyond to-morrow is unknown; of one thing only can we always be sure. Future joys may glide away, like the cooling waters that rose to the lips of Tantalus, whenever we attempt to taste of them; but the present is ours. Ours, not only in the enjoyment

it offers to-day, but in the memories it sends with us to gladden the coming time. Grief and pain, sickness and wounds, are robbed of their bitterness when there is one blessed hour upon which we can look back and feel that it is beyond the power of Fate to deprive us of the rapture it brought."

"It may be as you say, Captain Hamilton," she replied, "but what are they to do for whom the past has no raptures — whose eyes, turning back upon the vista of years, rest only upon sorrowful reflections?"

"To one whose years had really been so saddened, I would say — look forward, forward evermore, and conquer the gloom of yesterday by anticipating the brightness of to-morrow. But why do you ask? Such a question can be of no interest to you."

"More," was the mournful rejoinder, "much more than you perhaps imagine." Then, as if afraid of having disclosed more than she wished to reveal, she added:

"Just now, you yourself painted the future as unknown and uncertain. What right have I to claim exemption from the common lot? Why to me, more than others, should the sunshine come unmingled with tears?"

"Because you are better, and fairer, and lovelier; because the Creator permitted you to stray from your home among the angels, in mercy, not in anger; because you come to chase away the bitterness of earth, not to partake of its sufferings."

"Captain Hamilton," she replied, "must pardon me for doubting the soundness of an argument

which he has found it necessary to clothe in such extravagance of flattery."

"Flattery! And yet I do not wonder that you call it such, for I must confess that speaking the truth about you sounds like what the world calls flattery. It would be in the case of others, but not in yours, Adelaide."

"I think," said she, with a smile, "that a truthful delineation of me would be much more prosaic. Born in a tropical clime, your language has all the exuberance of the natural beauties of your native land."

"I know it!" cried Hamilton, passionately. "I am a child of the burning sun, not of the cold, frigid moon, which is now looking down upon us and which, I fear, chills your heart. Flattery! that was the word you used. You do me an injustice, Adelaide, if you think that my words sprang from so base a source. Does the Persian dream of flattering the sun when he kneels before his fire-crowned altar and in the gorgeous poesy of the East, hymns the praises of his burning idol? Yet in what Persian breast ever throbbed a wilder idolatry than mine? From the first moment I beheld you, my soul went out from my keeping. I did not love — no, Adelaide — I worshipped! And when I wished to tell you of it — when, again and again, the strong impulse was upon me to tell you to listen — I paused and hesitated because it seemed to me that language had no words to syllable the intensity of that adoration. Even now," he continued, taking her hand in his, "I am tortured by a dark fear that I have but poorly made you

comprehend how entirely every thought, and feeling, and desire, save one, have been swallowed up. How completely one word of yours will bless; how hopelessly one other word will blast the morning of my existence!"

The hand he had seized remained for a moment in his. The fragile form of the lovely girl shrank and shivered like an aspen when the north wind is blowing. A flood of tears came to her relief, and snatching her hand hastily away, she exclaimed, in tones of strong and deep emotion:

"Forgive me, oh! forgive me, Captain Hamilton—for, as Heaven is my witness, I never dreamed of this. I do not—I cannot love you, and if I have done anything to encourage your hopes I have deeply wronged you. Pity me, and forgive me."

"There is nothing to forgive, Adelaide. I was a slave before I had time to think of encouragement. Mine is a love that would have blossomed alike under cheering smiles or menacing frowns. It came unbidden; it will abide with me here, and when the curtain drops upon the stage of life it will travel with me through the countless ages of the world to come. But you are too deeply agitated to listen further now. In a few days I shall see you again. Until then, I will try to bear my disappointment. Good-night, and may the angels send messengers of bliss to people your dreams."

What were the feelings of the bold and gifted, though eminently bad and dangerous man, as he traversed the streets of the silent city? Stung,

wounded, almost maddened by the repulse he had met with, he walked rapidly on, trying to think, yet feeling that thought was impossible. Arriving at his own quarters, he extinguished the light and threw himself, dressed as he was, upon the bed.

"At least," he said, when the chaos of his feelings had assumed some degree of order, "at least, I have made no unnecessary or embarrassing disclosures. She thinks my purpose was honorable, and come what may, my character is safe."

From this villainous consolation he turned to other views of the situation. He ran over in his mind all that had occurred since their first meeting. He recalled every look, and tone, and gesture. He remembered the minutest shade that had passed over her expressive countenance. He taxed his ingenuity to find some plausible ground for hoping that perseverance might still be rewarded with success. It was in vain. The earnest truthfulness of her words and manner, her sorrowful agitation, her unconcealed distress, left no room to believe that the avowal of his passion had caused any feeling but that of unmixed pain.

"How," he inwardly asked, "could I have deceived myself so egregiously? I would have sworn that she was prepared for and expected a declaration. Surely, I have not been such a fool as to imagine a preference where none existed!"

Captain Hamilton, however, was well aware that the most astute and self-possessed human beings are not infrequently enticed into grave errors by that little bewitching demon, Vanity; and therefore he finally realized that he had construed mere

evidences of friendship into manifestations of a warmer regard. The more he reasoned, the more apparent did it become to him that he had been unwittingly hugging a charming delusion to his bosom. In his mortification at the discovery, he passed to the opposite extreme, and bitterly cursed his own stupid blindness.

Captain Hamilton did himself an injustice; a fact that is chronicled the more readily because it was not a practice to which he was often addicted. Adelaide Clifton had preferred his society to that of the men who were constantly about her, and she had taken no pains to conceal it. A man less under the influence of passion, and therefore more capable of reasoning clearly, might easily have mistaken the character of the preference so unquestionably exhibited and have acted upon that impression, without subjecting himself to the suspicion of possessing inordinate vanity.

The character of Alexander Hamilton was too strong and decided to admit of long indulgence in unavailing reproaches. He did not despair of eventual success, and his thoughts were occupied in endeavoring to devise some means of snatching a triumph from apparent defeat. He was conscious that an immediate renewal of his suit would be useless; but he knew the value of perseverance, and hoped that the opinion she evidently entertained of his character and acquirements might be improved and strengthened, until love took the place of friendship and, in some unguarded moment, virtue should fall a victim to passion.

Morning found him tossing upon a pillow that

sleep had not visited. At daybreak he went forth, as usual, to attend to his military duties. He had fixed upon no definite plan and resolved for awhile to trust to the chapter of accidents.

For two days she did not see him. On the third, he purposely called at an hour when he was almost certain of meeting other visitors. He was desirous of avoiding the embarrassment of a tête-à-tête at the first interview after the rejection of his suit, and selected his hour accordingly.

As he hoped and expected, he found that he was not alone; but her visitor was the last man on earth he desired to meet in that presence, as he was certainly the one whose rivalry he most dreaded, both in love and in war. Perfectly unconscious of the secret feelings of Hamilton, Major Burr arose to greet him with the usual courtesies on his entrance, and exhibited neither surprise nor curiosity at the embarrassment which he could not help remarking in the other's manner. Adelaide Clifton was a little flurried and excited, but Major Burr gave the conversation a direction that put them both at ease.

At this time, and, indeed, throughout the Revolutionary War, the duties of General Washington, his cares and anxieties, were by no means confined to the army. The affairs of a whole continent were on his shoulders, and every important resolution of Congress, upon every conceivable subject, was more or less influenced by his suggestions. Under such circumstances he was necessarily compelled to impose upon his aides a life of almost incessant labor. But little

leisure was left them to pay visits of courtesy or friendship, and it thus happened that Hamilton had not, heretofore, met Major Burr at the house where Miss Clifton was sojourning; nor had he been previously aware that there was any acquaintance between them.

He now learned for the first time that she had travelled from Albany to New York under Burr's protection. Jealousy is a keen sharpener of the vision. Shakespeare tells us that: "Trifles light as air are, to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of Holy Writ" — and that great master of the human heart might have added that these trifles are not always wrong indices to the truth. Sometimes they must — very often they may — lead us widely into error; but there are other times when they invest the judgment with the quickness and the certainty of intuition.

His thoughts once directed in the right channel, Hamilton perceived what Burr himself had never suspected. The cause of Miss Clifton's extraordinary distress on hearing a declaration of love from his lips was now easily understood. Giving to his rival no higher credit for virtuous self-denial than he was conscious of possessing himself, and believing that the same reasons that prevented him from offering his hand to Adelaide Clifton in lawful marriage would have a similar influence over Major Burr, Hamilton persuaded himself that the lovely girl had become a victim to the arts of a seducer, or, if not already degraded, that her ruin would not long be delayed. The wound inflicted by this persuasion of his rival's triumph

carried along with it a balm. It furnished an excuse for relentless hostility. If anything should occur to expose the vindictiveness of his hatred, he had only to point to the murdered innocence of Adelaide Clifton for his justification.

It was not pleasant to have the keen eye of Burr resting upon him while such thoughts filled his mind; and pleading urgent military duties as an excuse, he arose to take his departure. Burr took his leave at the same time, and Hamilton noticed, with a pang, that while his own adieus were politely returned, she extended her hand to Burr, saying:

“You are so infrequent a visitor that I must bid you a more earnest good-bye.”

For nearly the length of a square they walked on together, conversing about the probable movements of the enemy, Burr expressing the opinion that General Washington would soon be compelled to evacuate the city. Although concurring secretly in this opinion, Hamilton openly expressed his dissent.

“I do not think so,” he replied. “The city is strongly fortified and our men are full of that spirit of patriotism which makes one soldier, so animated, more reliable than a dozen hirelings such as King George has sent against us.”

“They may be hirelings,” said Burr, “but they have been hired long enough to have learned the art of war. You know, Hamilton, as well as I do, that our fortifications, though formidable in appearance, will melt away, as snow does beneath the sun, when the British fleet brings its guns to bear

upon them; and you know, as well as I do, that however patriotic the army, unless it has learned to quickly load, and prime, and fire, it will be of little service against the sturdy regulars of the King; and you also know it is true, that, no matter how brave the heart, the head must understand the art of war before the line of battle can have that steadiness which is required to repel an assault from trained troops. No, Hamilton," Burr went on, "it is one thing to fight Indians and another thing to meet English veterans on equal terms. General Washington's plan is all wrong. Instead of trying to hold the seacoast and thus be obliged to meet the combined forces of the English army and navy, he should retreat into the interior. This will deprive the enemy of the advantage of their warships and they will have to transport their ammunition and supplies across a country, to them unknown, but with which we are intimately acquainted. Follow this plan and we can harass them by day and by night, and when an opportune moment comes, fall upon and defeat their main army."

"Why do you not present your plan of campaign to the Commander-in-Chief?" asked Hamilton, blandly, though he had to struggle hard to suppress the sarcastic tone which naturally would have accompanied the words.

"I would," said Burr, quietly, "if I had the opportunities for reaching his ear that you have."

They separated on terms of apparent cordiality — Burr to return to headquarters, Hamilton to mature the dark scheme that was just beginning to assume a distinct form in his busy brain.

A perfect master of the art of dissimulation, he generally contrived to conceal from the public the terrible passions by which he was often shaken. Few were aware of the malignity habitually cherished by the polished gentleman and the dashing soldier, and none suspected the low intrigues and the vile expedients to which he was capable of resorting to injure an enemy or supplant a rival.

As Hamilton sat in his room, sipping a glass of wine and smoking a cigar, he soliloquized :

“As Burr said, I have the ear of the Commander-in-Chief and I mean to keep it. By many, I am looked upon as a foreigner — and so I am. It takes a long residence to turn British blood into American and I have not had the opportunities of my fellow officers in that respect; but, as Burr said, I can reach Washington’s ear and that brings me closer to him than they are — and I will keep so close to him that none can get nearer.”

He emptied his glass and then refilled it.

“I am studying my illustrious Chief to good advantage. I have learned that he is vain, proud, and extremely sensitive on questions of morality. I wonder what he would say if he knew that a member of his staff strongly disapproved of his military plans and was uttering seditious language to his brother officers? And I wonder, too, what he would say if he knew that this imitation Cæsar had entered a happy home and had left ruin behind him!”

CHAPTER XII

A BITTER QUARREL

THE plan which Hamilton adopted to circulate the scandal which he had invented was effective. Adelaide Clifton was not long kept in ignorance that her name had become a hissing and a reproach. Her delicate nerves were shattered by the shock. Reason tottered on its throne, and the lovely and innocent one soon became a raving maniac.

Her aunt, Madam von Ketterer, of course knew the cause of her niece's terrible mental condition and decided to have her removed from the city. Some twenty miles up the Hudson River was a small farm which the von Ketterers had occupied before the old Dutchman's fortunate business investments had enabled him to move to the city and build the large mansion which had been his pride and that of his fellow Hollanders. The farm still belonged to Madam von Ketterer. It was unoccupied and was selected as a place of refuge for the poor demented girl. A trusted servant of Madam von Ketterer, Wilhelmina by name, went with Adelaide. They were accompanied by an old Dutchman named Hans, who could not understand or speak a word of English, but with whom the woman could communicate in their native tongue. The doctor had told Madam

von Ketterer that medicine would be of no use in such a malady; that what Miss Clifton needed, and must have, was absolute quiet and absence from the scenes which would bring to her mind any of the circumstances which had led to her sad condition.

If Adelaide had been in her usual health and spirits, she would not have asked for a lovelier retreat than the old farmhouse of which she became an inmate. It was built upon a high knoll, and from its wide veranda a view of the beautiful Hudson might be had, as it flowed majestically by on its journey to the sea. But Adelaide's eyes were not opened to outwardly view the beauties of nature; they were turned inward and saw only unhappy thoughts and terrible dreams, instead of sky and tree and river.

In the paroxysms of her delirium, her great love for Aaron Burr found utterance. Sometimes she would imagine he was seated by her side, and for hours she would lavish endearing caresses upon some object that she had mistaken for the idol which madness had no power to drive from her heart. Then, again, when fancy changed the picture and he appeared to her distempered mind cold or unfaithful, agonizing sobs would choke her utterance and scalding tears blister her fading cheeks. Now she saw him returning victorious from the battlefield, and proud and lofty were the words that welcomed the coming of her glorious hero. Now, she was straying with him beneath the mighty elms where she had played in childhood, recalling all the innocent memories that

made it holy ground to her. At last a sadder vision settled permanently on her mind; she imagined that he had been struck down in his young manhood—she could see the crimson stains upon the white shroud that covered him, and busied herself in washing out the sorrowful tokens.

At the rear of the house was a grassy mound which in size and appearance closely resembled those often found in country churchyards. Whenever she could elude the vigilance of her attendants, Adelaide flew to it and shed bitter tears upon what she thought was the grave of her beloved one. Wilhelmina was a strong woman, but she found it impossible to drag Adelaide from her vigil with death, and it took the combined strength of Hans and herself to bear the unfortunate girl to her room and put her on her bed. There Adelaide would lie for hours in a state of stupor, her physical strength having been entirely exhausted by the violence of her emotions.

Wilhelmina sent a letter, twice a week, to Madam von Ketterer, giving her full particulars of her niece's condition. At the end of a month, there being no improvement, Madam von Ketterer decided to appeal to Major Burr. She sent for him and he promptly answered the summons. Madam von Ketterer was a practical woman of the most hard-headed Dutch stamp, and in stating the case to Major Burr did not beat about the bush. She told him what had caused her niece's condition. She said that light rumors had first reached Adelaide; then the story had been gradually magnified, until it reached the amplitude of a

full-blown scandal; that in the rumors and stories and scandals, one name had always been connected with that of her niece.

Burr's hand clutched nervously at the hilt of his sword. Then he sprang to his feet and cried, impetuously:

"What is his name? I was Miss Clifton's companion and guardian from Albany to this city. She trusted me when we were in danger, and now, when she is in sorrow, I will not prove faithless, but will call this man to account. Madam von Ketterer, I demand his name!"

"It is one that you will easily recognize," said Madam von Ketterer, grimly. "The name that has been uniformly associated with that of my niece in this dreadful scandal is that of Major Burr."

Had Burr been struck in the chest by a rifle ball, his face could not have grown whiter, nor could he have reeled and fallen back into his chair any quicker than he did. What a fool he had been! How unthinking he had been! How unmindful of what was going on about him! Why had he not known of this miserable plot to injure Adelaide and himself, soon after its inception? Then the instigator might have been found and justly punished; but at so late a day such a quest would probably prove fruitless.

It took but an instant for these thoughts to flash through his mind. Then it occurred to him that the stern-visaged old lady who sat regarding him, thought, no doubt, that he was guilty. Once more he started to his feet.

"Madam von Ketterer," he cried, "this is

horrible! I had no idea that such a story was in existence, or that my name was coupled with that of your niece, for whom I have always had the greatest respect and with whom no relations except those of a pure and exalted friendship have ever existed. On my honor as a gentleman, this is the truth. I will go to your niece and she will prove the truth of my words."

Madam von Ketterer was evidently convinced of the truth of the young officer's declaration, for her stern features relaxed and her harsh voice was full of an unsuspected tenderness as she said:

"Poor girl! I am afraid she can say nothing that others will believe. Wilhelmina writes me that she is as crazy as ever, although her strength is manifestly slowly giving way. She utters your name continually. Hans and Wilhemina try to keep her in the house, so that she may not be observed or overheard by others, but she often eludes their vigilance. If she meets strangers, after the manner of crazy folk she will tell them her story, and then the scandal will spread farther and farther."

"I will go to her at once!" cried Burr. "If, in her trouble, in her despair, she utters my name, surely I am the one to whom she will listen and to whom she may talk in a rational mood."

Major Burr secured leave of absence and made the journey to the old farmhouse on horseback. The fact that he had asked for permission to be absent from the city for two days soon became known to the other members of Washington's staff; one of them gave the information to a friend

not connected with the army, and that friend, in turn, communicated the news to one not loath to hear it — Captain Hamilton. To this informant, Hamilton said:

“Your friend can find out where Burr intends to go. You can follow up the clue thus given and ascertain whether she is living or dead.”

When alone, he said to himself: “Can it be possible [that I ever loved that girl? I do not think so. I do not believe that a man could really love a woman and then feel as I do now — that the most welcome news that I could hear of her would be that she is dead and buried.”

The dead, he knew, do not talk; but he knew, also, that if the maniac recovered her reason she might divulge certain things which would connect him with the instigation of the scandal.

Since her departure from the city, Adelaide had not been in so tranquil a frame of mind as on the morning of the day that Major Burr started from New York to visit her. She asked Wilhelmina, in a most rational manner, if she might go to walk in the garden. Wilhelmina consented, and the young girl wandered from one fragrant flower to another, picking a rose here and a slip of green or a leaf there, forming them into a little nosegay, and singing softly to herself, as Ophelia had done when weaving her wreath.

The sound of a horse's feet was heard clattering on the road. The young girl turned her face and a divine smile lighted up her features when she saw who was approaching. He had no sooner alighted from his horse than she was by his side.

“I am so glad you have come!” she cried. “I have been waiting so long to see you, but I expected you to-day and I have gathered these flowers for you,” and she passed him the little nosegay which she had made.

Burr knew that he must humor her in every way. He thanked her for the gift and then asked her if she would walk with him in the garden. At the farther end of it a rough bench stood beneath the overhanging branches of a large tree. They sat down in the grateful shade, and talked — of what? As Burr recalled the conversation, afterwards, they had talked of everything excepting that which he had been told was uppermost in her mind. She did not mention his name, but was evidently greatly delighted to see him. Was her reason returning slowly, or had she fully recovered it? He determined upon a bold method to learn the truth.

“Just before I came away I had a long talk with your aunt, Madam von Ketterer,” he remarked.

“My aunt!” cried the girl. “Oh, yes, how is she? I have not heard from her for a long time.”

“She is very well,” said Burr, “but too busy with her household duties to come with me, as she had at first intended.”

“I should like to see her very much,” said the girl. “Can’t I go back with you?”

Burr thought to himself — was it possible she had forgotten what had taken place and that the part of her brain upon which was impressed the

knowledge of the dreadful secret had been burned up by an inward fire? If so, his task would be easier than he had anticipated.

"Your aunt would be very much pleased to have you come back to the city, but for one reason, which I have assured her is a very good one. The British are closely watching it, and no doubt will soon make an attack, both by land and sea. If it should fall into their hands, it would be much better for you and your aunt if you were both outside the city limits. With her knowledge and consent I have come to take you to a place of safety. Will you go with me?"

"Why, of course!" cried the girl. "Why should I not? We made the long trip from Albany to New York together. You were kind to me then and I know you will be so now. I will find Wilhelmina and tell her that I am going."

"No, I will tell her," said Burr. "I have a message for her from your aunt. Sit here in the shade, and I will be back in a few moments."

Wilhelmina could hardly believe it when Major Burr told her that, in his opinion, Miss Clifton's reason was slowly returning: that he thought it best for Miss Clifton to leave the farmhouse at once; that it would be necessary for Wilhelmina to accompany them, and that she must be ready to start within an hour.

Burr's horse was soon divested of its military saddle, and harnessed into the humble vehicle which was the only mode of conveyance that the farm possessed. Wilhelmina and Adelaide occupied the back seat; the noble horse recognized

his master's voice and dashed forward at full speed.

Before her departure, Wilhelmina had given Hans full instructions what he was to do during her absence. Burr so shaped his course as to avoid the city of New York. The pass which he carried enabled him to get through the military lines whenever they were encountered, and in due course of time he handed over his fair charge to his aunt, Keziah Burr, who lived in a quiet little Jersey village some twenty miles beyond Elizabeth town.

He then made arrangements by which Wilhelmina could return to the farmhouse, while he sought Madam von Ketterer and told her the strange conclusion of his visit.

"She will recover," Burr said to Madam von Ketterer. "I think she has forgotten nearly all that has taken place in her life, with the exception of a few marked instances. She recalls her trip with me from Albany to New York, but said nothing to indicate that she connected me in any way with her present condition. Of course, under the circumstances, I did not refer to it. But something had to be done. It occurred to me that the best thing to do would be to take her away from the farmhouse before she relapsed into her former condition. I know but little of the peculiarities of dementia, but I have read that a change of scene is of far more value than medicine. Then, fortunately, I thought of my aunt. Your niece was perfectly willing to accompany me. During the trip, your servant Wilhelmina

was her attendant, and she will tell you that your niece could not have been left in a happier home nor in one where she will receive more loving care and attention, unless, Madam, it were in your own house."

The day following the departure of Adelaide from the farmhouse, Hans had a visitor. To the questions propounded in English, Hans could only answer with a dubious shake of the head and Dutch words, which, translated into English, would have meant, "I don't understand you, sir." The visitor indulged in a number of English expletives, which Hans, fortunately, could not understand. Had he known what they meant, he would have held up his hands in holy horror, for he was a devout member of the Reformed Church.

The visitor, finding appeals and threats equally ineffective, then resorted to pantomime. In this he was more successful, for he managed to convey to Hans, who was not nearly so obtuse as he appeared to be, his desire to learn the condition or whereabouts of a certain young lady who was crazy. Hamilton himself would have been scandalized had he witnessed the attempts of his emissary to convey, in pantomime, ideas which his hearer had to transform into good solid Dutch.

Hans had not forgotten certain instructions which he had received from Wilhelmina. Grasping a shovel he went vigorously to work, as though bent upon digging a large hole in the ground. After awhile he desisted, and pointed to it. Taking a log of wood, he placed it in the hole which he had dug; then he simulated crying, and bowed his

head low, as though in great grief. He looked up into the visitor's face — and although his own was a stolid Dutch one, its meaning could not fail to be easily read. The visitor put a silver coin into the old man's hand, mounted his horse, and rode back to New York.

"I can carry Hamilton no more pleasing news," said the man, as he rode on. "He will be glad to learn that she is dead and buried; and so am I, for dead women, like dead men, tell no tales."

The offer of a position on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief was not one which could be peremptorily refused; and yet it was not one which Burr, of his own free will, would have sought. He was anxious for service in the field. He had studied the art of war, and was a born disciplinarian. He had recognized the fact that the untrained Colonial militia could never hope to meet the British regulars with any prospect of success, until they had been made into soldiers by proper instruction and rigid drilling. What prospect had this appointment for him? It was simply an opportunity to meet General Washington upon familiar terms, to sit at a table and write out the orders of his superior officer, with an occasional opportunity to deliver these same orders to commanders actively engaged in the field.

Having a natural repugnance to performing such service, and hoping that he would be relieved from the irksomeness of it at an early day, it is no wonder that his habitual politeness and courtesy deserted him, to some extent, and he made no endeavors to become intimately

acquainted with the other members of General Washington's military family. His acquaintance with some of them was very pleasant, but there were others, one, particularly, with whom it seemed impossible to establish even friendly relations.

Hostilities, though impending, had not actually begun, and young Burr consoled himself with the thought, that, as soon as the war really opened, he would, no doubt, be detailed for service which would give him an opportunity to win renown. With this idea in view, he applied himself closely to his clerical duties, though inwardly rebelling that the hand which yearned to wield a sword was obliged to handle, day after day, an insignificant quill pen.

He might have continued his clerical duties, though with an unwilling spirit, had not the Commander-in-Chief betrayed, in his intercourse with him, a certain coolness and constraint, which Burr sought in vain to satisfactorily explain to himself. What had he done which had led the General to show by his actions what he evidently did not intend to express in words—a lack of confidence in the latest addition to his military family?

In Burr, two qualities predominated. He was excessively proud and more than ordinarily ambitious. The daily question that he had to solve in his mind, and the question came up some days more than once, was whether pride should wait upon ambition, or ambition wait upon pride. It seemed to be fated that pride should win and ambition be cast into the background.

Strange as it may appear, it had never occurred to Burr that the cause of the coldness towards him shown by the Commander-in-Chief was connected in any way with the Adelaide Clifton incident. He had asked for two days' leave of absence, but four full days passed before he reported for duty. He explained to the Commander-in-Chief that private business of a most urgent character had detained him longer than he had expected. It had seemed to him at the time that his explanation was not deemed fully satisfactory by the Commander-in-Chief, but he was too good a soldier and too strict a disciplinarian, himself, to find fault with being held strictly to account in the performance of his military duties. If the thought had entered his mind that Washington was in any way cognizant of his supposed relations with Adelaide Clifton, and that his reserve was due to such knowledge, the incident which led later to his severing his connection with Washington's official family would have completely banished such an idea from his mind.

One day the Commander-in-Chief was sitting at his table, reading some private dispatches. Burr had approached him to make some inquiry in regard to an order which he was writing, when, noticing the General's preoccupation, he remained near his chair, waiting for recognition. While standing there, for an instant he became oblivious of his surroundings. His thoughts went back to that tempestuous night on the Plains of Abraham when Montgomery had fallen. To a soldier born, such a night as that was glorious. What a con-

trast was this daily contact with work that he loathed! His eyes were directed towards the paper which the Commander-in-Chief held in his hand, but they saw nothing but the ice-clad pathway beneath the walls of Quebec.

Suddenly the Commander-in-Chief started to his feet, and turning the paper which he was reading face downward, his eyes blazing with anger, said in a loud, sharp voice to Burr:

“Why are you spying over my shoulder? So many of our movements have become known, in some way, to the British, that I cannot be too careful.”

“Had his ears served him aright?” was the thought that ran through young Burr’s mind with the rapidity of lightning. “Could the General distrust him, and for such a reason? Did Washington really think that he was disclosing secrets to the enemy? If so, his past coolness was easily explained; if so, there was but one course which he could follow.”

Turning to the Commander-in-Chief, he said:

“Your Excellency, I can understand your words in but one way. An equal, I should have no hesitation in calling to account, if he uttered such an implied aspersion upon my honor; but when your Excellency utters such words, I can only bow submissively and tender my resignation as a member of your staff.” Without another word he turned and walked rapidly from the room.

Washington sank into his chair and sat for a few minutes in silence, his eyes fixed upon the

paper before him. When he looked up, he encountered the gaze of a dozen members of his staff, who had been regarding him attentively. Then the particular one with whom Burr had been unable to establish friendly intercourse nodded approvingly to his associates, and approaching the Commander-in-Chief whispered something in his ear. A look of stern determination showed itself upon the General's face, and taking up a quill he wrote the following:

“ TO MAJOR AARON BURR :

“ Your verbal resignation as a member of my staff is accepted.”

Then he signed it.

CHAPTER XIII

MARGARET MONCRIEFFE

WHEN Major Burr received from the hands of one of his former associates the acceptance of his resignation, he was too proud to make any inquiry of the envoy, who had been one of the members of the staff whose company he had enjoyed and sought. The young man looked at Burr as he was reading the paper, and there was an expression in his face which seemed to indicate that he wished to say something. Burr divined this, but prevented the utterance of the words by saying:

"Thank you. I had expected this. Further discussion of the matter will do no good."

Thus rebuffed, the aide had returned to headquarters. When questioned as to his reception, he replied that Major Burr refused to talk, and under the circumstances he did not know that he blamed him. His words were repeated and soon reached the ears of the Commander-in-Chief's particular confidant. The confidant sought out the one who bore the acceptance of his resignation to Burr, and suggested that his comment upon Major Burr's action was improper and showed a want of respect for the Commander-in-Chief.

"Well," replied the aide, "I am not so proud nor so ambitious as Aaron Burr. My father is

well-to-do and was much opposed to my joining the army. I am here to fight for the liberties of my country, and also, if necessary, for the good name of my friends. If you wish to report anything to General Washington, you may say to him that if you will mind your business I will mind mine. If you insist upon attending to mine, as well as your own, I shall request the Commander-in-Chief to accept another resignation."

Burr lost no time in writing to Governor Hancock. He told him that he had resigned his position upon General Washington's staff, for he was confident that there would be no opportunity for him to secure the active service in the field which he desired. By return mail he received a letter from Governor Hancock, advising him to apply for a position on the staff of Gen. Israel Putnam, who was in command of New York City. The governor informed him that he had written to General Putnam, endorsing his application. Burr was cordially welcomed by the old hero, who promptly tendered him a position upon his staff and invited him to become an inmate of his home.

Burr, freed from the irksome toil which his clerical duties had always seemed, now devoted himself to active outdoor work. From early morning until late at night he was busy inspecting the construction of fortifications, drilling troops, conveying orders from his general to subordinates, and in making himself master of every inch of ground comprised within the limits of the city. From the Battery to Harlem River he examined every road, lane, and clump of trees, with an eye to

their possible strategic value in actual warfare. He drew a plan of the city, upon which he marked the location of the different divisions of the troops and their respective numbers, the situation of the fortifications, number of guns, kind and quantity of ammunition, and many other items of value and interest to his superior officer. General Putnam was delighted with his aide-de-camp, and there grew in Burr a love and veneration for his general which lasted throughout his life.

His home associations were most pleasant. Mrs. Putnam was a Quaker lady, whose kindness of heart and sweetness of face and temper were both soothing and pleasant to the young officer, who had been bereft of both father and mother before he was three years of age. This was, in reality, the only home that he had known which possessed those loving attributes which are sacred in the heart's language.

Every day, however, young Burr had an hour or two of relaxation. This came after the evening meal, of which he partook with the general and his family. On his first appearance at the table he was introduced to a Miss Moncrieffe. She was, apparently, about eighteen years of age, beautiful in face and figure, well educated, and vivacious in the extreme. She met the young man's sallies with sharp repartee, and the Quaker mother and her two daughters listened, with astonishment, to the quick interchange of thought. Burr learned, the next morning, from General Putnam, that her Christian name was Margaret, that she was the daughter of a major in the British army, then stationed on Staten Island.

"Why do you not let her go to her father?" asked Burr.

"The Commander-in-Chief won't consent to it," was Putnam's reply. "I'd send her back to-morrow if he'd let me. The fact is, the British look upon us as rebels, and unless they're taught a lesson, when they capture any of our men they'll give them short shrift and hang them as traitors. Now, General Washington proposes to hold all the British that we can capture as hostages, and if they hang any of our men ——"

"But you don't mean to say," Burr cried, in astonishment, "That General Washington would hang Miss Moncrieffe as a reprisal?"

"It isn't my business to say," replied General Putnam, "what the Commander-in-Chief would do. All I know is, if he told me to hang her, I'd obey him without question. A good soldier never criticises the orders of his superior officer."

To Burr, the possible fate of this beautiful young girl became invested with new interest, and developed in his nature, with its really feminine heart, a strong feeling of sympathy for her in her uncomfortable, and it might be, dangerous position.

While seated at his table the next morning after his arrival, an orderly brought him a crumpled note. Burr opened it and read the following :

"MAJOR BURR :

"If you cum acrost me anywhere, don't let on that you know me. Good reasons for keepin' quiet. It will all cum out later.

"ABE BUDLONG."

Burr dismissed the orderly, saying that there



Burr and Margaret Moncrieff.

“Are you trying to escape from the enemy?” asked Burr. *Page 161.*

was no answer, and then tore the note into infinitesimal pieces. He knew that something was in the wind, for he had absolute reliance upon the sagacity and clear-headedness of Abe Budlong. He had not seen his admirer since their arrival in New York, after leaving Arnold's command, and did not know whether he had gone home or rejoined the army; but he inferred from the letter that Abe was probably on duty somewhere in New York City.

That very morning an incident occurred, which, instead of explaining Abe Budlong's note, rendered it more mysterious. Burr was galloping towards headquarters, after having made a visit to one of the forts, when he saw Miss Moncrieffe, mounted upon a superb steed, approaching him at a gallop. Some distance behind her, a soldier was urging his horse to the utmost in a vain effort to keep up with her.

Both Burr and Miss Moncrieffe reined up their horses and exchanged the usual salutations.

"Are you trying to escape from the enemy?" asked Burr, looking towards the horseman, who was now within fifty feet of them.

"Yes and no," the young girl replied. "I like to get away from him, because he almost talks me to death when we ride side by side, and yet I have no desire to dispense entirely with his company, for General Putnam has told me, and he always means what he says, that I cannot go riding unless accompanied by an escort."

By this time the horseman had reached them, and Burr saw that it was none other than his

friend Budlong. Acting upon the advice contained in the note, Burr paid no attention to him, but said:

"I think you do right, Miss Moncrieffe, to follow General Putnam's orders. I am sure that he would not oblige you to do anything that he did not consider for your best interests."

"He is a darling old gentleman," said Miss Moncrieffe, with her usual impetuosity. Then, with a gay laugh, she cried: "I am sorry that he is married. I feel quite sure that he would propose to me, if he were not."

"I have no doubt of it," said Burr, gallantly, "but you must not forget that there are others who might do the same thing and who are not encumbered, at present, with a family."

"Oh, I am too young to get married," said Miss Moncrieffe, with a slight toss of her head. "Father says that he is going to marry me off when I am eighteen, and I have four long years to wait before that time comes."

Burr could hardly realize that the young woman before him was only fourteen years of age, but he was too much of a gentleman to question the truth of her statement or make any further reference to it.

"Come, Mr. Budlong," cried Miss Moncrieffe, "let us try a gallop to the next corner. If you get there first, I will pay for all the beer that you can drink," and she dashed off at full speed, waving her hand to Burr.

As Budlong passed Burr, he said in an undertone: "I'm keepin' my eye on her."

It was only natural that two bright young people, thrown daily into each other's society, should become friendly. They had many interests in common. Both were well educated and their conversation was often devoted to the consideration of the latest literature. One day, Burr found Miss Moncrieffe engaged in painting a bouquet of flowers, in water colors. He was something of a connoisseur, and criticised some points, in detail, regarding the drawing and coloring. When shown conclusively that she was wrong and that the error should be corrected, she pouted, and declared that they suited her best that way. She seemed passionately fond of painting, for every few days Burr found her engaged upon a different picture. In each of these he discovered the same errors in drawing and coloring which he had noticed in the first one; but Miss Moncrieffe refused to make changes in them.

One day, Burr produced a book, and said: "Miss Moncrieffe, so far, my criticisms of your drawing and coloring have been based upon my memory; but I have brought with me to-day a work on botany, which will, I think, convince you that I am right and that you are wrong. Now, if you will bring out your collection of pictures, we will look them over and compare them with this standard authority."

To Burr's surprise, Miss Moncrieffe's face grew red, even to her forehead. Thinking that he had offended her by being hypercritical, he apologized, and would have dropped the subject, but Miss Moncrieffe said:

"Pardon my momentary embarrassment, Major Burr, but the fact is, I have given my drawings away to some friends, who declare themselves charmed with them, although I told them that my instructor, Major Burr, said he thought them very poor."

"You have done me a great injustice, Miss Moncrieffe," said Burr, assuming an air of severity. "I had intended, at the close of the war, to become a teacher of drawing and painting; but, by your remark, you have ruined all my chances of obtaining pupils."

A few evenings later, Major Burr, who had been detained beyond the usual supper hour by a necessary inspection of some raw militia, rode to the barracks for his supper; for he knew that that careful housekeeper, Mrs. Putnam, had long ago cleared away the remnants of the evening meal. While there he met Abe Budlong.

"I'm glad I've met yer, Major," said Abe. "I've been waitin' fer a chance ter talk ter yer ever since I writ that note, but I knew yer'd trust me till yer heerd what I had ter say."

Burr assured Abe that he possessed his entire confidence.

"Well, the fact is, Major," said Abe, "I've bin doin' double duty. I've bin actin' as escort fer that female Britisher that's stoppin' with Gin'ral Putnam, and I've bin actin' the spy at the same time."

"I hope you have not been spying upon Miss Moncrieffe," remarked Burr, a little sharply.

"That's jest what I've bin doin', Major, and

when yer hear the hull story I don't think yer'll blame me. Yer see, ev'ry time she goes a-ridin', she allus takes a little portmanteau with her. I thought, at fust, she had somethin' ter eat in it; but as I never saw her eat anything when we was out together, I grew kinder suspicious. I allus went ter the house ter git the bag and fasten it on the saddle afore she cum out; so one day I made up my mind ter play spy, and I looked in the bag, and all there was in it was a little roll of paper. She got away from me that day by turnin' a corner, and I didn't find her fer nearly ten minutes. I shouldn't have thought so much of that, fer she's young and frisky, but when I looked in the bag afore I took it in the house, I found that little roll of paper was gone."

Burr was silent. His first inclination had been to reprove his old friend for his curiosity; but he determined to say nothing until Abe had finished his story.

"Well, yer see, Major, that same thing has taken place a dozen times. Every time, there hasn't bin anythin' in the bag 'cept a roll of paper; and every time, it hasn't bin there when she got home."

"I don't see that that proves anything," Burr remarked.

"Well, I don't suppose it does on the face of it," said Abe, "but there's two things ter be considered. Fust, what was in the papers; and secondly, who did she give them to? Well, a spy ain't much use less he 'tends ter business clear up to the handle, and I've found out that them papers

was nothin' but picters of bokays, and I've found out, too, that she gives them to a Britisher who's here in New York on parole. Now, there's another pint. What do them British fellers do with them arter they gits them from her?"

Burr thought for a moment, then he said: "You have done just right, Abe, but don't say a word about it until you hear from me again. I will think the matter over and decide what is best to do next."

Burr did think the matter over, and the result of his thought was a letter to General Washington, informing him that, in his opinion, Miss Margaret Moncrieffe was engaged in correspondence with the enemy; that this correspondence was carried on by means of pictures, the peculiar drawing and coloring of which undoubtedly conveyed information to the British; and he suggested that she be removed from such close proximity to the enemy's lines, and placed where such opportunities could not be had in the future.

To this letter Burr received no response, but at the expiration of a week an order came from the Commander-in-Chief to have Miss Moncrieffe conveyed to Kingsbridge and turned over to the care of General Mifflin, who was in command of the troops at that post.

Whether Miss Moncrieffe ever knew or ever suspected that Major Burr was concerned in any way with her removal from General Putnam's household, can only be inferred from a slight incident which happened after General Washington decided to send her back to her father. She was

invited to take dinner with the Commander-in-Chief. General Putnam and Major Burr were among the guests. This was the first occasion upon which Burr had met General Washington since his somewhat unceremonious leave-taking. Beyond the usual civilities, no conversation took place between them.

At dinner, as was the custom, toasts were drunk. General Washington had proposed the health and happiness of Miss Moncrieffe, and she was then called upon to respond. Raising her glass of wine, she said, in a clear, distinct voice, at the same time casting a glance towards Major Burr, who sat regarding her attentively:

“To Lord Howe!”

The guests at the table looked at her with ill-concealed astonishment, but she kept her eyes fixed upon Burr, while a satirical smile played upon her face. General Washington broke the awkward silence by saying:

“We will drink to Miss Moncrieffe’s toast, on this condition — that the first time she is called upon to offer a sentiment in the company of Lord Howe, her toast shall be to some officer of our army.”

Still keeping her eyes fixed on Major Burr, Miss Moncrieffe said: “Your Excellency, you have my promise.”

A young officer, who sat next to Burr, nudged him and whispered in his ear:

“If Miss Moncrieffe proposes that toast, Lord Howe will be apt to keep you in mind, Major.”

Miss Moncrieffe kept her promise. With

much formality she was delivered to the British officer sent to take her in charge, and it so happened that she was conveyed to a British frigate upon which Lord Howe was, at the time, in consultation with the commander. As before, toasts were drunk and sentiments offered. When her turn came, Miss Moncrieffe raised her glass and proposed,—“To General Israel Putnam!”

Her words were received with gestures of dissent and strong expressions of disapprobation. The tumult she had raised was quelled by the words of Lord Howe, who said:

“Gentlemen, we will drink the toast proposed by Miss Moncrieffe. She has told me, privately, that General Putnam has been as kind to her as though she were his own daughter, and I consider that her appreciation of that kindness detracts in no way from her known British loyalty; and now, gentlemen,” continued Lord Howe, “allow me to offer a sentiment, which I know will be fully understood and appreciated by all of you.”

He raised his glass, turned towards Miss Moncrieffe, placed his hand upon his heart, and making a courtly bow, said:

“Gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a deserved tribute to the health, future happiness, and safe deliverance from captivity of——” Here he paused, and every one present supposed that when he resumed he would finish the toast with the name of Miss Moncrieffe; but the words that he uttered were — “the Queen of Flowers!”

CHAPTER XIV

SYSTEMATIC VILLAINY

IN the obscurity of twilight, two men were silently moving along the "Broad Way", as it was then called, of the city of New York. Early as the hour was, the regulations rendered necessary by the presence of an army expecting an assault, together with the unseasonable severity of the weather, kept the good people of Gotham within doors, and scarcely a sound was heard along the almost deserted street, save the occasional tramp of a patrol of soldiers, or the clatter of a horse's hoofs, as some aide or orderly dashed along with orders for different posts. Our pedestrians walked rapidly on, hardly interchanging a syllable, until they arrived at a tavern of some pretensions, and were ushered into an apartment probably prepared in anticipation of their coming.

One of them was a tall man of forty or forty-five years of age, rather sparely made, but muscular and wiry. His forehead was broad and massive, eyes dark gray, mouth large, and lips firmly compressed. There was an air of power about the whole appearance of the man. One felt that he was in the presence of a strong personality — with a head to conceive, a will to dare, and a hand to execute whatever his interest or his ambition might prompt. The other was Capt. Alexander Hamilton.

Directing some bottles of wine to be brought, the elder of the two dismissed the obsequious host, and both drew chairs up to the log fire that was burning brightly in the open fireplace, in comfortable contrast to the chilly dampness without. Hamilton was the first to speak.

"Well, Billings," he inquired, "what news do you bring?"

"Bad enough, Captain Hamilton; the girl is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Hamilton, starting to his feet and grasping the arm of his companion with convulsive strength. "Dead! Is this true? For, mark me, man, it will not be safe for you to trifle with me on such a subject."

"I have not been in the habit," replied the other, his hand slowly stealing beneath the folds of his vest, as if there was something there to which his grasp was accustomed and which he desired to clutch, more from habit than from a belief that it would be necessary to use it,— "I have not been in the habit of calculating very nicely what might be safe or unsafe in my dealings with the world; nor am I much addicted to answering rude questions while a ruder grasp is on my arm."

"This is folly!" muttered Hamilton, releasing his hold. "I mean you no bodily injury. That pistol in your bosom would be poor protection if I did."

"May be so; and I have certainly no wish to put it to the test, though it has never failed me heretofore, and I have no fears that it will fail me hereafter."

Hamilton resumed his seat in silence. Large drops of perspiration gathered upon his brow, his lips quivered, and his whole frame was convulsed by terrible emotions. The fierce struggle endured for more than a minute, and his voice was choked and husky, as he asked :

“Did you say Adelaide Clifton was dead? The young, the beautiful, the good; gone, gone forever!”

“I told you the truth,” was the reply; “but it added so little to the sweetness of your temper, that I had no inclination to repeat the story.”

There was another self-struggle. It ended, and Alexander Hamilton was once more master of himself.

“I beg your pardon, Billings; I have been foolish and intemperate. If you knew all, you would excuse it.”

“Possibly I may not know all of your share in the business, but I know more of my own than it is agreeable to reflect upon on a still night in a lonely place. I know that you invented the calumny, and that I circulated it; and although neither of us could foresee the melancholy result, we are none the less guilty of murder.”

“Calumny! I tell you, Billings, that, as God is my judge, I believed it at the time. I thought, too, that the story would never reach her ears, for I knew that she was about starting for her home, and I hoped it would die away, except in quarters where we might think proper to keep it alive.”

“Then, Captain Hamilton, you have the advantage of me, decidedly; for I never believed a sylla-

ble of it, nor did I ever doubt but that some kind friend would communicate to her all that was said, together with whatever additions were necessary to fill up any little omissions in the pleasing tale. But this is profitless. The question is not what degree of guilt attaches to either of us, but rather, how we are to turn untoward circumstances to the best account.

“Before we begin the discussion, you must pardon the liberty I am about to take in offering you some advice. I am more than double your age, and there are few phases of human character I have not had occasion to study. The first step toward success in life is self-control. Such outbreaks as you have been guilty of to-night are disagreeable to your friends and dangerous to yourself. No man will trust his fortunes in the same boat with yours, if they are continually liable to be upset by ill-governed passions. In the path of ambition which you have deliberately chosen, you must command your words, your looks, your actions. You must be able to call a gay smile to your lips when necessary, although the devil is tugging with red-hot pincers at your heartstrings. Avoid self-deception, for of all deceptions it is the least profitable.

“Look at your acts in the light of their consequences. Weigh those consequences before the act is irrevocable, and not afterwards. If the end to be attained is of sufficient importance to justify the ruin of a dozen honest names, or the breaking of as many gentle hearts—why, ruin or break them; but do it deliberately, and do not fly into

a rage with those who may be serviceable, because you are conscious of having been a very naughty boy. Exhibit as much temper as you please, the oftener the better, since it helps to build up a character for frankness; but never exhibit it when you feel it, for ninety-nine times out of a hundred it will be foolish and imprudent. Genuine feeling is a great drawback, affected feeling a great advantage to a rising man. Follow this advice implicitly, and there is no eminence you may not hope to attain. History furnishes more than one instance in which a successful soldier, with worse prospects than yours, has won the diadem of a king."

There was much in the cool and villainous counsel of his confederate not altogether unfamiliar to Alexander Hamilton; the concluding sentence, too, pointed to a result that he was beginning to contemplate as possible, and to cherish with a good deal more pleasure than was becoming in a republican soldier. Still, he was irritated by the tone of superior wisdom in which it was delivered; and there was a touch of scorn in his reply, from which he did not seek to divest it.

"Pray, Mr. Billings, how does it happen that you, who know so well the paths to success, have yet missed them so widely?"

"Your question is natural, and the sneer that accompanied it was natural, also; though, let me tell you, it was far from a wise one. It is one of the very indiscretions against which I have been warning you. A revengeful man would remember it to your prejudice, and some day do

you a mischief on account of it. I shall only register it as the second folly of which you have been guilty in the last half hour. And now, to answer your inquiry, I might say that I had failed for the want of your genius, your capacity, or your accomplishments, and your vanity would accept the explanation. I choose to be more candid.

“In my youth there was no such revolution as this of the Colonies in progress or in contemplation. The opportunities that you possess were therefore denied to me; and this explanation would be as soothing to my vanity as the other would be to yours. To another than yourself, it is all that I would give; but as I have just warned you against self-deception, I must not give you occasion to suspect me of belying my own theory. I failed, because my knowledge came after my character was gone. Put the devil himself upon the earth; let it be known that he is the devil, and he could not mislead a child.

“At the commencement of my career I was in possession of a fair fortune and a fair character. Both were dissipated in gambling hells and other resorts of vice and immorality. What mattered it, that in the meantime I had acquired an amount of knowledge and of self-control that would have been invaluable a few years earlier?

“The road to what men call honorable ambition was barricaded against the broken-down gambler and debauchee. Instead of a struggle for power and place, my life became a struggle for bread and when at last I had accumulated wealth, the means by which it was acquired were so ques-

tionable that I did not care to give occasion for impertinent inquiries by placing my name before the public. I believe it is not necessary to extend my confession any further, unless you are curious to know my history from the time of my leaving Europe."

"You need not go on," said Hamilton, somewhat petulantly. "I am not particularly interested in the past. What concerns me most is the future. It is so long since I have seen you, and not knowing the outcome of the affair, I have been in a perpetual state of unrest. There is only one thing that I envy Aaron Burr, and that is, his absolute control of his feelings under all circumstances."

Billings smiled grimly. "Then you have already come to the conclusion, Captain Hamilton, that the control of one's feelings is absolutely essential in one who is determined to be successful in life? I am following your fortunes, Captain Hamilton, and mean to serve you faithfully; but in disposition I am somewhat like a dog; and if I were to quarrel with you, or you were to throw me over, I should only be following my dog-like nature in becoming an humble servitor of your present rival. It is not uncommon, you know, for a detective who is on the track of a criminal to actually become an admirer of the skill shown by the pursued one in his efforts to escape arrest."

"I judge from your remarks," said Hamilton, "that you were so much overcome by the contemplation of the death of which we —" and as he uttered the pronoun he gave it a forcible empha-

sis — “ have been guilty, that you had given up the quarry in disgust.”

“ Most men have been too busy,” said Billings, “ since our last interview, to waste time in listening to stories of private scandal; yet I have not been altogether idle. I have already whispered a pretty little story of the seduction of Miss Moncrieffe in a quarter where it will be sure to reach the General. By the way, Captain, do you know I have a shrewd suspicion that we are much nearer the truth this time than we were before ? ”

“ Why so? What have you seen ? ”

“ Nothing, myself; but servants will talk, you know, and both General Putnam’s and General Mifflin’s speak of longer interviews and more tender partings than were to have been expected between the daughter of a British major and a rebel in arms against his King.”

“ I do not believe it. Mrs. Putnam would have turned them both out of the house at the first appearance of impropriety.”

“ Well, I do believe it; but as it will equally favor our schemes whether he is really guilty or we only make him appear so, it is not worth while to discuss the truth of the case. Besides, I do not want to have my belief in his present guilt dispelled. After having been actively instrumental in circulating one false story of the kind, it is a comfort to think that I have discovered a true one at last.”

The color faded from the cheek of Hamilton, and his voice trembled, as he replied :

“ Let me beg of you, Mr. Billings, not to refer

again to Adelaide Clifton. That tragedy has been played out, and I would rather hear no further allusion to it, particularly in your cold and devilish tones. As to Major Burr, I am half inclined to abandon my plans against him and trust to superior energy or superior fortune in the race between us."

"There is a little question to be settled, Captain Hamilton, before taking that resolution, which I should be sorry to think you had entirely overlooked."

"Pray, what is that?"

"How far you have a right to engage men in schemes for your benefit, and then abandon them to the mercy of enemies they have made on your account."

"If I remember rightly," said Hamilton, "you had the frankness to inform me that your services were rendered chiefly with a view to your own advancement."

"Certainly! I am not so fond of tortuous paths as to tread them without the hope of reward. Still, you must not forget that it was yourself who devised the plan for the destruction of a dangerous rival. In the execution of that plan you sought my assistance. When your views were unfolded to me, I concurred in your opinion and have labored faithfully according to your directions. I had no other interest in it than that of binding you to me by such ties, that hereafter you could not decently refuse any reasonable request I might make. You showed me a means of accomplishing the object I had at heart, and I

adopted it. If you had shown me any other, it would have been the same. Of my motives, I make no concealment. I have been willing to work for you and take the chance of your paying me hereafter. A part of my work, the most disagreeable and the most dangerous, too, is done. Your bond to me is uncanceled, and you have no right to lessen my security for its future payment."

"Suppose I admit the force of your reasoning, how will you prove that I jeopardize your interests by refraining from further acts of hostility against Major Burr?"

"It needs no proof. The proposition is self-evident. You may remember the fable of the serpent which stung a child and killed it. The father endeavored to destroy the reptile, but only succeeded in striking off a part of its tail. Afterwards, a reconciliation took place, and the two engaged in friendly conversation. The man pressed the serpent to come out from his hole — an invitation his snakeship politely declined. 'Why not come out?' asked the man. 'Are we not friends?' 'Oh yes! but your dead child and my shortened tail are not; and we should quarrel on their account.'

"You are in the condition of the serpent. There is that between you and Aaron Burr which makes a truce impossible, and if you leave your hiding place before you have an opportunity to sting him, you are lost."

Something, not exactly a sneer, nor yet a smile — a compound expression of anger and

mortification — curled the lips of Hamilton and imparted a tone of bitterness to his reply:

“I presume you do not expect me to thank you for the compliment deducible from your story, and its application. That Major Burr is a true man, I know; that he is a man of genius, all reports agree; yet I did not know that you held him in such high esteem, or regarded me as so deficient in like qualities, as to render an open contest between us one of certain defeat to me. You will pardon me, I trust, if my vanity prevents me from looking at the picture in the same light that you do. I am loath to believe that I cannot meet him on terms of equality.”

“Six months ago, you might have done so; but within that time events have transpired that put you at perilous disadvantage. What would become of your open rivalry if he should discover and proclaim your agency in bringing about the quarrel between himself and the Commander-in-Chief? I will not refer to other matters, Captain Hamilton, as they are disagreeable to you. That alone would be sufficient to blast you in the estimation of your comrades and your superiors. What security can you have that he does not make the discovery? Or, suppose he does not, you will be forever haunted by the fear of detection. Your resolutions will be vacillating, and your efforts will be timid. Can you doubt what use a bold and sagacious adversary will make of such advantages?

“Be assured that if you mean to run out the race of ambition in which you have entered, you

must crush Aaron Burr without his knowing the hand that deals the blow. For you, there is no return ; and hesitation is destruction. The ambitious aspirant can hope for no forgiveness when his errors are exposed, for the only evidence of amendment that will be received is an abandonment of the designs he has cherished. You would have, indeed, the alternative of retiring to private life, or of contenting yourself with a subordinate position. When you are no longer in the way, men may overlook your former indiscretions and extend to you the charity of forgetfulness.

“ If you have made up your mind to this course, it is but fair that you should take upon yourself the blame for what has passed and leave me unimpeded by any other enmities than those with which you found me. If, on the other hand, you are resolved not to abandon your hopes of power and greatness, there is no alternative except a steady persistence in the plans we have adopted. Major Burr must be kept too busy in repelling new accusations to allow him leisure for minute inquiries into the sources of old ones. In my judgment, this will be easy ; for I repeat, that I believe he is guilty this time, and in his efforts to hide the real crime he will be very likely to overlook the false accusation.”

“ And I repeat,” answered Hamilton, “ that I do not and cannot believe him guilty ; though to you, who are a doubter of the existence of virtue, my reasons may appear ridiculous. He is too highly esteemed by General Putnam and too

warmly loved by his wife, to have committed an act of such flagrant immorality beneath their roof. I cannot be mistaken. He is certainly as innocent as I am. There may have been some love passages between them, for she is a girl well calculated to inspire the utmost madness of passion; but if so, they were of an honorable nature, and both General Putnam and his wife have been apprised of whatever has taken place."

"Ah!" exclaimed Billings, in a tone of more surprise than he was wont to exhibit; "ah! I had not thought of that. It is possible," he continued, after a pause, "that you have hit the right nail on the head. Upon reflection, I am inclined to think you have. That foolish girl to whom I gave a guinea for watching Miss Moncrieffe and reporting her acts, has been giving me her inferences and calling them facts; and I, like an idiot, swallowed her story without investigation, because I wanted to believe it. Another such blunder will woefully lessen my self-confidence; though in this case — thank the stars, or the devil, or whatever had a finger in the business — the mistake is of no great consequence. He will be quite as anxious to protect the name of his intended wife as he would have been to hide the errors of his victim. Either will give him food for anxious thought; and the best of it is, that he will be so hampered by pride and delicacy in the one case, or by the consciousness of guilt in the other, that he will take no notice of the report, unless it is forced upon him so publicly as to be unavoidable. You have the trumps in your own hand, Captain Hamilton, and if you do not win the game, the fault will be yours."

“ There is but one view of the case which does not seem to have occurred to you, Mr. Billings, that strikes me as worthy of consideration. Is it not possible that, to win the daughter’s hand, he may seek to recommend himself to the father’s favor by turning traitor to his country? Such things have happened in times not very remote from ours.”

“ No, Captain ; I thought of that and dismissed the idea as altogether improbable. It is possible, to be sure, that a man in love may make an infernal fool of himself in every conceivable way, and Major Burr would save us a great deal of trouble by proving himself no exception to the rule ; but he will not do so. It is my habit to study attentively the character and dispositions of those who occupy to me the relations of friend or foe. Major Burr, though properly neither the one nor the other, is in my way, and has not escaped my scrutiny. His heart is in the American cause. He does not adhere to it, as you and I do, because he believes it will triumph in the end. He is bound to it by birth, by kindred, by education, and by association. He comes of the old Puritan stock that first settled the wilderness ; and the bones of his ancestors, for generations back, are moldering beneath this soil. It is my fixed opinion, that if he were suspended over the pit of hell and you were to offer him the alternative of betraying his country or dropping into the burning lake, he would choose the latter.

“ I know you are thinking, that, admitting this to be so, it does not negative your suggestion ;

since it would be easier to take this sudden and desperate resolve than to resist the daily and hourly pleading of the passions, when a beautiful woman is the lure. Allied to a nature like yours, the reasoning is undoubtedly correct. Major Burr is of a different stamp. In him, patriotism is stronger than love; and if the gifted beauty from whom Socrates took lessons, and of whom Pericles was first the pupil and then the slave, could revisit the earth, the eloquence which captivated the philosopher, and the charms which enraptured the warrior-statesman, would be wasted in the effort to win him to the side of England. I use strong language, for I wish to impress upon you my earnest conviction of the truth of what I utter. We must make our calculations upon winning the game without any assistance from him."

"You are assuming more than half the argument," responded Captain Hamilton. "You are taking it for granted that I intend to play out the game; whereas, I have informed you that I am strongly inclined to throw up my hand and begin afresh."

"I did not think you serious; particularly, as I have heard from you no denial of my right to be consulted about a matter which so materially affects my interests."

"I do deny it, and insist that I alone am the rightful judge of the course it becomes me to take."

"You are in error, Captain Hamilton, and your position will not bear argument, if I were disposed to argue it. It would do me no good, however,

and afford me no pleasure to convince you against your will. I prefer that your decision should be made according to your own sense of what is due to me and to yourself, only insisting that, as I have no fancy for the game of blind-man's-buff, you will not leave me to grope in the dark, but inform me distinctly what your determination is."

The perfect coolness of the practised villain, the total absence of every expression of regret, anger, or astonishment, and his studied avoidance of every word that implied a threat, had a meaning for Alexander Hamilton that was perfectly terrible. Until recently he had looked upon James Billings merely as an unscrupulous knave, who might be used when necessary, and bullied or bought into silence when his services were no longer needed. After he was too deeply committed to recede, he discovered that he was, to a great extent, in the power of a man of vast mental resources, of great wealth—how great no one knew—; without a touch of fear, or pity, or remorse; full of ambitious schemes, as yet but dimly disclosed; prepared to commit any crime that promoted his views, and reckless of any human suffering that might follow his acts.

Knowing this man as he did, knowing that with him there was no middle ground—that he must be either an ally or an enemy; knowing further, that in less than one hour from the moment of a rupture between them, he would be plotting his destruction as earnestly as he was now scheming for his advancement, and remembering how much that was black and damning he could reveal,

Captain Hamilton, bold as he was, felt his heart sink within him, and his good resolutions took to themselves wings and flew away.

Oh, it is a bitter, bitter draught, when the haughty son of genius finds that by one misstep, one plunge into crime, a thing to which he had ascribed no more than a reptile's consequence has obtained the mastery over his actions, and whenever his better nature turns in horror from the crimes to which he is urged, there stands a relentless demon, beckoning forward with one hand, while the other points to the abyss of infamy behind. Hamilton's reply was an index to the thoughts that oppressed him:

"I have no alternative, I suppose, but to yield to your wishes, or to blow out your brains!"

"And the last alternative is one that I trust Captain Hamilton instantly dismissed, since these same brains may be serviceably employed in the promotion of his interests."

"I did dismiss it. Why, or wherefore, is immaterial. My resolution is taken to go on as we agreed. As I understand that you have nothing particular to communicate in reference to that matter, it is best to drop the subject."

"I had no idea when I broached it, that it would lead to so much conversation between us; still, I do not like to leave anything unfinished, and I confess to some curiosity to know what pleasant vision you were indulging in a short time since in connection with my sudden decease."

"Mr. Billings, you have spared me the mortification of listening to a threat from you, and I

would willingly have exercised a like forbearance. If anything should sound unpleasant in what I am going to say, remember that your inquiry extracted it. The vision I was indulging in was one that will remain near me hereafter. The day that I resolve to break off our connection will be the last of your life. You have the power to injure me deeply, and whenever I suspect that you are about to use it — and I shall suspect it the moment we quarrel — I will slay you as certain as there is a God in Heaven!”

The words were hissed through his closed teeth and the bloodless lips scarcely moved when the sound escaped them. The superhuman self-control of Billings failed him for once, and his eye quailed before the glance of fire that was fixed upon him. It required a strong effort to recover from his confusion, and reply in his usual voice:

“That is a bond between us I had not thought of. By the Lord, there are few friendships so well cemented as ours! A quarrel is death to both.”

CHAPTER XV

PRIDE IN THE DUST

DURING the summer of 1776, while actively engaged in strengthening the fortifications on Manhattan Island, in anticipation of a combined onslaught of the British by both sea and land, Major Burr had many conversations with General Putnam regarding the final plan of the campaign. Burr, although only a little over twenty years of age, had studied the art of war so far as it could be learned from text-books and histories, and had had some practical experience in actual warfare.

To his mind, the plan of defence adopted by General Washington was a wrong one. He had said as much to Hamilton. He argued in his debates with General Putnam, that the patriots, by clinging to the seaboard, were obliged to contend with the combined land and sea forces of Great Britain. His plan was for the Continentals to retreat inland and form a base of operations so far from the seacoast that it would not only prevent the British from utilizing their fleet, but would also oblige them to transport their ammunition and supplies over rough roads, to a great distance from the shore. Small bands of soldiers could continually harass them and capture the ammunition and provision trains.

But General Putnam put all of Burr's arguments one side, by saying that he believed in old heads for counsel and young heads for action. He advised Burr to follow the fortunes of war as they came to him, and added that he had no doubt that the young man had a future of great promise before him. Silenced, but not convinced upon this point, Burr took up another line of argument. The hostile British and American forces were facing each other on Long Island. On one side were well-trained and disciplined troops, commanded by brave and well-educated officers; on the other side were men and officers equally as brave, but comparatively untrained in the art of war.

"It is of no use, General," said Burr, one day. "Our militiamen will never stand up before the British regulars in the open. They will fire one or two volleys and then either retreat in search of some shelter or throw down their arms and fly for dear life."

"Then you don't think your countrymen are very brave?" asked General Putnam, grimly.

"There are no braver men in the world," cried Burr, "than my countrymen, but I do not think that it is an indication of bravery for undisciplined militia to stand up before the pick of the King's troops, and be shot down like dogs. They have been used to fighting from behind stone walls, houses, and breastworks, and it will take some time before they will feel themselves strong enough to meet, unflinchingly, a charge of the enemy."

"Then you think," said Putnam, "if we have

a battle on Long Island, that we are likely to be defeated?"

"I am sure of it," replied Burr, "unless the enemy should develop an unexpected weakness in the field. Our principal hope lies in the ability of our riflemen to pick off their officers. Often, the best disciplined troops become demoralized when their officers are shot down."

What Burr had foreseen in his mind's eye actually came to pass. The disastrous battle of Long Island proved conclusively that his estimate of the fighting qualities of the two armies had been a correct one. A retreat was ordered, and although the behavior of the Americans during the battle had not been an edifying one from a military point of view, great ability was shown in the conduct of the retreat, which was successfully accomplished before the enemy became fully aware that it was under way. During this retreat, Major Burr came under the eye of Gen. Alexander McDougall, who that night formed an opinion of the ability of the young soldier which made him ever afterwards a valuable and powerful friend.

General Washington called a council of war, and the question was earnestly debated, as to whether it would be possible to defend the city against a combined attack by the British land and naval forces. The decision was what Major Burr had foreseen. The result of the council of war was an order from the Commander-in-Chief to evacuate the city. The movement became known to the British, and long before it was completed, the enemy crossed the East River, with the evident

intention of capturing as many of the Americans as possible before they had escaped.

The scheme of evacuation had been well planned, and, as a whole, well carried out. All of the large bodies of troops, with one exception, successfully avoided contact with the advancing British columns and made their way in safety to Harlem. One large body of men, however, forming part of General Silliman's brigade and under the command of General Knox, had taken possession of the earthworks, which was, in reality, only a mud fort, situated near what is now the corner of Broadway and Grand Street. In the minds of the Americans, this crude fortification made them masters of the situation, and they awaited, without a sign of trepidation, the oncoming of the British.

Suddenly a voice was heard, demanding; "Who commands this fort?" The questioner was a young and beardless officer, mounted upon a fine charger and accompanied by two horsemen. General Knox emerged from the centre of a body of subordinate officers, with whom he had been conversing, and replied:

"I do, and I propose to hold it against the enemy to the last gasp."

"That would be foolishness," said the young officer, in calm tones. "You have a large number of men, but no water or provisions. The fort is not bomb-proof, and the enemy could destroy it entirely, in an hour, with their ordnance."

"May I ask your name and rank?" inquired General Knox, in a somewhat supercilious tone, as he regarded the young officer.

"I am Major Aaron Burr, aide-de-camp to General Israel Putnam," was the reply. "My advice to you is to seek safety in flight. Such a course will not be dishonorable, for you will be far outnumbered, and your successful defence of this rude fortification is hopeless." General Knox and many of his officers still seemed unconvinced, but Major Burr's words had evidently fallen with telling effect upon the ears of the garrison, and they manifested their approval of the advice given by the young aide-de-camp.

"But how shall we find our way to the main army?" asked General Knox. "I am not acquainted with the roads, and, without a suitable guide, the chances are that we shall march into an ambuscade and all of us fall into the hands of the enemy. Better to die fighting gloriously, than perish ignominiously as prisoners of war. In the eyes of the British, you know, Major, American prisoners of war are self-convicted rebels, only fit for the hangman."

"General Knox," said Major Burr, "I know every foot of this island, from here to Harlem. As aide to General Putnam, I have ridden over it scores of times. I know every road, lane, and by-path. If you commit the charge of your command to my knowledge and vigilance, I will guarantee to lead you safely to the main army."

This declaration, made in a loud voice, so that it could be heard by the members of the garrison, and spoken in such distinct tones, had a marked effect upon the men. Three cheers were given for Major Burr, and the officers, who, up to this time,

had been unconvinced of the necessity of a retreat, quickly changed their minds. The necessary orders were soon given, and the large column, headed by Burr and his two attendants, moved northward towards the place of safety.

Several small parties of the enemy were met at various points, but as the Americans far outnumbered them, they either took refuge in flight or were shot down in their tracks. True to the promise he had made, Major Burr led the whole command in safety to Harlem, where they joined the main army.

Strange as it may seem, when the official dispatches, giving an account of the successful retreat from the city, were forwarded to the Continental Congress by the Commander-in-Chief, Major Burr's services were not referred to, therein.

After reading these official dispatches, Maj. Aaron Burr was not in a happy frame of mind. He was young — not yet twenty-one — very proud, and very ambitious. Like many young men, perhaps he placed in his own mind too high a value on the services which he had rendered during the first retreat from Long Island, and the second from Manhattan Island. But it must be allowed, that if his efforts were not worthy of the commendation which he felt they deserved, they were surely worthy of an honorable mention. From some unexplained cause, they had not received any recognition whatever, and it was the knowledge and contemplation of this fact that had thrown Major Burr into an unhappy state of mind.

He was aroused from his reflections upon the

injustice which he thought had been done him, by the entrance of a messenger, who brought him an order to report at once to the Commander-in-Chief. Quite a long distance had to be covered on horseback in order to answer this peremptory summons, and during the ride, Burr's feelings were in a state of tumultuous excitement. One moment, a deep sense of the injustice which he felt he had suffered overcame him and drowned every other feeling. Then, his pride came to his relief and he declared to himself that whatever happened, however he might be treated, he would not mention the fact, and no one should ever know that he felt aggrieved in any way. Next, ambition assumed control of his feelings. With ambition is always connected, to some degree, a regard for policy—that is, to secure one's ambition it is often necessary to conceal one's real feelings, or, in plain language, to play the hypocrite.

Now, nothing was further from Burr's mind than a desire or an intention to play the hypocrite. He came of a truth-speaking and truth-dealing family, and whatever might be his faults, he could not deliberately act the liar in order to further his ambition.

Yet he felt, as he rode along, that it would be inadvisable to allow his pride to so overmaster him, that, when he entered the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, either looks or actions should indicate a preconceived or prearranged resentment. No, he would proceed on a different plan. For once, at least, he would humble his pride in the dust. And why should he not? He was but a

major in the army. He had been summoned to the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, a man who had been selected by the combined wisdom and intelligence of the Colonies to lead their armies to victory. He needed the cordial support of every officer and man in the army. Why should he hold aloof? If he had been denied what he considered proper recognition so far, might it not be possible that this lack of just reward would lead to still greater acknowledgments in the future?

Somewhat to his surprise, but to his great satisfaction, when Major Burr was ushered into the presence of General Washington, he found him alone. Nothing could be more opportune. Before the General addressed him upon some matter which he presumably had in mind, Burr felt that it was his duty to refer to the unpleasant character of the interview which had terminated his relations with the General's military family.

"Your Excellency will pardon me, I know," he began, "if I refer to our last official interview, in which, I am sorry to say, my pride led me to say and do what I have since deeply regretted."

General Washington surveyed the handsome young officer who stood before him, and replied:

"To a man of honor, the frank acknowledgment of a wrongful act is as creditable as the performance of a brave action. Let us say no more about the matter, Major Burr."

"As it pleases you, your Excellency," was Burr's rejoinder; "but may I presume to ask a question?" The General bowed.

"May I inquire if you received from me a letter, written at General Putnam's headquarters, informing you, that, in my opinion, Miss Margaret Moncrieffe was engaged in a treasonable correspondence with the enemy, by means of paintings of flowers, so arranged and colored as to convey intelligence, presumably according to some pre-arranged code?" General Washington set his lips tightly together, then he said:

"I have no recollection of any such letter. If I had seen it, I should certainly have replied to it."

"May I ask whether your Excellency examines all the letters addressed to you?"

"It would be impossible for me to do so," said the General. "A great part of my correspondence is attended to by the same gentleman who had charge of it when you were attached to my staff."

"I thought so," said Burr. Then he asked: "Did this same gentleman suggest to you the advisability of removing Miss Moncrieffe from General Putnam's house?" Again General Washington pursed his lips, and a slight frown gathered upon his brow. At last he said:

"I think he did, but I am positive that he did not give as a reason for the change the one you say that you communicated to me in your letter."

"I thought not," again commented Burr. "If your Excellency will not consider that I am trespassing too much upon your kindness and forbearance, I have one more question to ask."

"Proceed," said General Washington, somewhat sharply. He turned in his seat, and taking up a quill, signed a paper that lay before him.

"To whose negligence," continued Burr, "may I rightfully ascribe the failure to mention my name in the official reports of the battle of Long Island, the retreat from New York, and the final retreat from this place?"

"The reports," replied General Washington, "were prepared by the same gentleman whose duty it was to make them out when you were my aide-de-camp."

"I thought so," said Burr, almost mechanically. "Your Excellency, accept my thanks for your condescension and forbearance during what may have seemed to you a period of useless questioning."

"If you have received suitable replies to your inquiries," said Washington, "I am greatly pleased to have been able to furnish them. Perhaps, Major Burr, your merits have not so thoroughly escaped recognition as your inquiries seem to imply. There is no officer connected with our army in whose sagacity and judgment I have greater confidence than in that of Gen. Alexander McDougall. I opine that he is your friend, for he has not only written to me but has spoken to me personally of your meritorious actions." Burr bowed low, as these complimentary words fell from the lips of the Commander-in-Chief.

"In my dealings with the officers of the army," continued Washington, "I have ever borne in mind that they are not citizens, subject to civil laws, but are wholly governed by the rules and regulations promulgated for the government of the army. If an officer performs his duty as a soldier, I do not deem it within my province to



Major Burr receiving his commission from General Washington.

General Washington arose to his feet, rolled up the parchment and passed it to Lieutenant-Colonel Burr. *Page 197.*

investigate or even consider his actions as a man." Burr's face flushed.

"Now, Major," continued Washington, "do not consider my remarks as personal in their nature. They are of general application and apply no more to you than to any other officer of the army. To show you my confidence in your ability, discretion, and valor as a soldier, I have signed this paper. It is your commission as lieutenant-colonel in a new regiment of the New York line, just organized by Colonel Malcolm of New York City. I do not believe in the appointment of mere civilians as officers in the army, but Colonel Malcolm has freely given his services and his wealth to form and equip this regiment, and in the opinion of my associates he is fully entitled to the honor conferred upon him. But you can readily infer from what I have said that the command of the regiment will naturally devolve upon the lieutenant-colonel, and to him will fall whatever military honors that regiment may win in battle."

General Washington arose to his feet, rolled up the parchment, and passed it to Lieutenant-Colonel Burr, who bowed low as he received it. "Colonel Burr," said he, "I hope the fortunes of war may spare your life and secure to you all the glory which the results of a laudable ambition may bring you."

CHAPTER XVI

THE VICTORY AT PARAMUS

FROM the day that Aaron Burr received his commission from General Washington, he was always called Colonel Burr. In fact, although he was never promoted beyond the grade of lieutenant-colonel, he uniformly performed the duties of a full colonel, and on some occasions those of a general of brigade.

When he reached the headquarters of Colonel Malcolm's regiment, he at once paid a visit to his superior officer. Both men were evidently astonished at the result of their mutual inspection. Colonel Malcolm was dressed like, and looked just what he was — a prosperous merchant. Colonel Burr was attired in the garb of a soldier, but he was so youthful in appearance, so slight in stature, and so boyish in his actions, that Colonel Malcolm's heart fell within him. What could General Washington mean by sending this mere stripling to take charge of a regiment of soldiers?

But Colonel Malcolm was too much a man of the world to express any disappointment or disapprobation until the young officer's mettle had been tried. A week in camp, during which time he kept his eye upon Colonel Burr, convinced him that he had been fortunate in securing so courteous a gentleman, so strict a disciplinarian, and so

competent a soldier, to maintain the credit of his command. The day he left for New York, he said to Burr:

“ I must confess, Colonel Burr, that when I first saw you, I doubted the wisdom of General Washington’s choice; but I am convinced, that, although my knowledge of mercantile affairs is, undoubtedly, greater than General Washington’s, my knowledge of military matters is insignificant compared with his opinion. I trust that you will consider these remarks, Colonel Burr, as an expression of my implicit confidence and trust in you.”

Left in sole command, Burr had ample opportunity to carry out his own ideas. Up to this time, he had simply obeyed the orders of others; now, he had an opportunity to win renown for himself, but it must depend upon the efficiency and gallantry of the men he commanded. He had a personal interview with each of his subordinate officers and questioned them severely regarding their knowledge of military tactics. A dozen of them he found as deficient in military knowledge as a group of schoolboys would have been. He then decided upon a move which could not fail to subject him to the severest criticism. He called for the resignation of these officers and informed them that they had mistaken their vocations. He told them that they could serve their country best by returning to New York and resuming their positions in the mercantile establishments from which they had come. His action, as he had anticipated, created a storm of excitement. The matter was referred to the general in charge of

the department, who chanced to be General McDougall, and he fully sustained the action of the young colonel.

The places of the discharged officers were filled with the best material available, and Colonel Burr then began a rigid system of drill and inspection. Nothing escaped his careful and practised eye. At the end of three months it was acknowledged on all sides that Malcolm's — that is, Burr's — regiment was the best drilled one in the department.

The discharged officers, with one exception, accepted the advice given them and gave up all hopes of military preferment. One young lieutenant, however, waxed wroth at what he considered most unjust treatment. He wrote an impudent and abusive letter to Colonel Burr, declaring that he was not a gentleman, and challenging him to mortal combat. Colonel Burr promptly accepted the challenge and fixed the time and place for the meeting. On arriving there, he found that the lieutenant had not presented himself; nor did he do so, although Burr waited an hour for him.

Colonel Burr then mounted his horse and rode promptly to the residence of the young officer's parents. He was courteously received, and, as it was near the dinner hour, he was invited to partake of the meal. The invitation was accepted and Colonel Burr was the life of the company, which was composed entirely of ladies, with one exception. This exception was the young lieutenant who had sent him the challenge, and who, during the meal, showed plainly that he was not enjoying himself.

After dinner a short time was spent in general conversation. Colonel Burr then approached the mother of the young man and told her that his military duties required his immediate return to camp, but before going he would like a private conversation with her son. The mother, deeply affected, tried to speak, but her lips could not frame the words. Bursting into tears, she left the room. Colonel Burr paid his adieus to the other ladies of the party and went into the garden.

He was soon joined by the young lieutenant, whose whitened face and chattering teeth betrayed the fact that he was in a state of mortal terror. The ladies of the party had gathered upon the portico of the house, evidently expecting that something terrible was going to happen. They stood with clasped hands and eyes strained to watch the movements of Colonel Burr and his companion.

"Come with me, sir," said Burr, taking the young man by the arm. He led the way towards a grove of trees, where, after entering, they were screened from the gaze of the company gathered on the portico.

"Young man," said Colonel Burr, "when you write an insulting letter to a gentleman, and challenge him to mortal combat, common decency requires that you should either keep the appointment, or if you are prevented from doing so by other more important engagements, you should, at least, send your adversary word, so that he may not lose valuable time in waiting for you."

Hardly had these words escaped from him, when there was a chorus of shrieks, and the mother

of the young man, accompanied by the other ladies of the party, rushed into the little grove and threw themselves upon their knees, their clasped hands raised towards Colonel Burr in evident supplication. The mother cried:

“Spare my boy! He is the only one left to me. One son has already fallen a victim, and my husband is with his regiment.”

“Oh, spare Eddie, Colonel Burr, for his mother’s sake!” cried the frightened women, in unison.

To Burr’s mind there was both a solemn and a ridiculous side to the scene. “Ladies,” he said, “I did not come here with any intention of wreaking vengeance upon a defenceless man. You see,” touching the scabbard of his sword, “I am armed, but he is not. You certainly do not suppose that I would murder him.”

The ladies, somewhat relieved, arose to their feet and gathered about the young man.

“Ladies,” continued Colonel Burr, “I have been giving your young friend a little kindly advice. If he accepts it in the spirit in which it is offered, he need fear no injury from me. At the same time, I think he owes me an apology. I will not ask him to speak it in your presence. He can write it and send it to me by a messenger.”

The written apology reached Colonel Burr the following day, but the mother of the young man and her lady friends always believed that it was their prompt interference which saved the young lieutenant’s life.

Now that his regiment was fully equipped and in warlike condition, Colonel Burr yearned for an

opportunity to test the temper of his men. It soon came. Word was sent to him by the general commanding the department, that ex-Governor Tryon, with some twenty-five hundred men, had come into New York State from Connecticut on a marauding expedition. They had confiscated horses, cattle, and provisions, without regard to ownership, and were preparing to return to Connecticut with their plunder.

Colonel Burr put his regiment in motion and was fast approaching the rear of the retreating column, when word was brought to him that the British were moving in an opposite direction from the one he was taking, and he was ordered to change the course of his command. Although convinced that the information given him was incorrect, he followed General Putnam's suggestion and obeyed orders until he became assured that his first course was the correct one. He then immediately retraced his steps and by a forced march caught up with the rear guard of Tryon's army.

Leaving the main body of his men behind, he took a small picked force and moved forward under cover of night to reconnoitre the enemy's picket line. Fully convinced that success depended upon strategy rather than numbers, he told his small force of men to conceal themselves in a grove and to gain as much sleep as possible. By his direction the men had brought with them a quantity of pieces of homespun cloth. Fastening some of this about his boots, so that his steps could not be overheard, Burr advanced cautiously,

alone, to the enemy's picket line. After learning his position he returned to the grove and awakened his men.

Their boots, like his own, had been encased in pieces of homespun, and their tread was noiseless. Colonel Burr led the party. Suddenly they were challenged by one of the pickets. Burr immediately shot him dead. Then he called in a loud voice: "Forward!" and the small squad of men who followed him fired a volley at the pickets, and then, drawing their pistols, rushed forward, their loud cries convincing the enemy that they were attacked by a superior force. Those pickets who were not killed escaped to the main body, carrying their wounded with them.

Colonel Burr and his gallant little company reached the regiment early in the morning and orders were given for an advance. They found that the enemy, thoroughly frightened had abandoned the greater part of their plunder and had fled precipitately back to Connecticut.

This event is recorded in history as the Battle of Paramus. It was the first engagement in which Colonel Burr was in sole command, and it was his first victory. Its success was due wholly to his military knowledge and intrepidity.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MUTINY AT VALLEY FORGE

COLONEL MALCOLM'S regiment was the envy of the others in the department. The constant drilling, marching, and counter-marching to which the men had been subjected by their rigid disciplinarian, Colonel Burr, had produced the effect he had desired. New uniforms had been provided by the generosity of their wealthy colonel. Their accoutrements were also new, and being brightly polished, gave the soldiers that spick-and-span appearance so pleasing to the martinet. As they marched, their gun barrels glistened in the sun like silver, and even to the unpractised eye, the steadiness of their demeanor and movements was easily discernible and appreciated.

Colonel Burr now felt that he was in command of a regiment of soldiers, and he yearned for another opportunity to show their prowess and gratify his personal ambition. He made careful inspections, both by day and by night, of the locations and numbers of the enemy. Feeling sure that he had discovered a weak point in their line, which, if attacked suddenly, would surely put them to rout, he sent a description of the proposed movement to the Commander-in-Chief, and requested that he might be allowed to lead the

attack. To this letter no reply was received, and Burr, despite his usual buoyancy of spirit, felt his heart sink within him. Surely, to the best of his ability, he had performed his duty as a soldier. Why was it that some demerit with which he was not acquainted operated to retard his advancement in the field?

He had about given up hope that any notice would be taken of his letter, when to his surprise he learned from his superior officer, Gen. Lord Stirling, that the latter had been directed to make an attack upon the enemy with the immediate force under his command. This did not include Colonel Burr's regiment, and he was forced to sit idly by and see his plans carried out by another.

But he soon found that the plans, as carried out, were not his own. The point selected for attack was not the one which he had chosen. The Americans were repulsed, and it is easy to conceive that the one individual who was so close to the Commander-in-Chief that he could whisper in his ear at any moment, had no doubt assured his superior officer that if the attack had been led by so young and inexperienced an officer as Colonel Burr, the result would probably have been much more disastrous.

The British army, under the command of Gen. Sir William Howe, took possession of the city of Philadelphia and for six months retained their hold upon it. At the end of that time, Benjamin Franklin remarked that Philadelphia had captured the British. There is nothing that so enervates an army as taking up winter quarters

in a large city. The opportunities for daily drill and more valuable field movements are necessarily dispensed with. Instead of practising the arts of war, the officers devote themselves to the arts of peace. They are invited to social functions and become used to high living and equally high drinking, instead of the soldier's usual simple and healthful fare. The soldiers of the line imitate their officers as far as possible, and when the time comes for movements in the field, the deterioration in rank and file is plainly manifest.

General Howe having resigned his command, Gen. Sir Henry Clinton was sent out from England to relieve him. As a fitting ending to the long season of the winter's sports, a great carnival was arranged to commemorate the departure of the old commander and to welcome the new.

Major John André was placed in charge of the festivities, and proved himself an able master of ceremonies. He gave to the *fête* an Italian name, calling it "The Mischianza." It opened in the morning with a procession of gaily decorated boats upon the Delaware, the occupants being the chief performers in the coming carnival. Later in the day, upon a spacious lawn, a tournament was arranged in mediæval style. Brave knights bowed before fair ladies and participated in jousts in honor of their lady-loves, the victor of the tournament being crowned with laurel by the Queen of Beauty. A sumptuous dinner and grand ball took up the evening hours, at the close of which there was a great display of fireworks.

We have looked upon this picture. What a

contrast is the one which is now presented to our view! The ground is covered with snow and the wind is biting cold. Twenty miles above Philadelphia the American army is encamped; more than a third of its number being incapacitated for duty by disease and suffering, due to lack of food, clothing, and proper shelter.

In rudely-built log houses the patriot army was assembled. Hundreds were shoeless. The clothing of thousands was in tatters, offering but slight protection from the inclemency of the constantly recurring storms.

There is in every man a spark of divinity, and the light of that divine gem is his love for country, home, and those who sit about the fireside. The wintry blasts at Valley Forge froze the hands and feet and limbs of those subjected to their rigor, but they could not quench the patriotic fire that glowed in the hearts of our forefathers.

Colonel Burr was destined to be again surprised, but this time in a more pleasant manner. At a point upon the Schuylkill River called "The Gulf," the Commander-in-Chief had stationed a body of militiamen, whose duty it was to watch the opposite side of the river and report at the earliest possible moment any advance by the British. These men, who had, so far, only played at being soldiers, did not possess the nerves of steel which are the pride of the "regular" who has passed through his baptism of fire and can face a foe unflinchingly. They had fought the enemy from behind stone walls and trees. To their timid gaze Clinton and his army seemed ever on the move

towards them, and they sent continual alarms to the Commander-in-Chief, obliging him to prepare for battle, only to find out later that the alarms were groundless.

Something must be done to change this condition of affairs; so Washington wrote to General McDougall, requesting him to supply him with a competent officer to take charge of this important post of observation. General McDougall, in response to the request of the Commander-in-Chief, sent Colonel Burr. He was the bearer of a letter from General McDougall to General Washington, which informed the latter, that, though loath to part with him, he had given him the best-qualified officer in his command for the position which the Commander-in-Chief had described.

Colonel Burr was immediately detailed to take command at "The Gulf." At his request all officers superior in rank to himself were withdrawn. He then entered upon the hard and ungracious task of making reliable soldiers out of unreliable militiamen. As he had done when taking command of Colonel Malcolm's regiment, he first weeded out the manifestly incompetent subordinate officers and sent them to the main army. Daily drills and inspections were ordered and carried forward with incessancy.

It was only natural that before long a spirit of insubordination should show itself among those who thought the rigid drilling unnecessary. To them, war required only the knowledge of how to fire a gun. It did not seem essential to know also

how to hold it, how to march with it, how to stack it, and how to recover it quickly in case of sudden attack. When forced to retreat, they had thought it sufficient to seek shelter behind stone walls or buildings. It required a nerve which they did not possess to retreat in as good order as though they were on parade.

Burr had learned from some of his officers that there were signs of discontent, but he was not a man to be turned aside from a fixed purpose by ordinary obstacles. He determined to subject the entire command to the most rigid inspection and drill in which they had as yet participated, and gave orders to that effect.

He had just signed the last order and had delivered it to an officer, when his orderly informed him that a soldier wished to see him. What was Burr's surprise to find that his visitor was his old friend, Abe Budlong, whom he had not seen since the retreat from New York City. Abe told him that he had been with the army at Valley Forge, but that on learning that Colonel Burr had been assigned to command at "The Gulf," he had secured permission to join his force until camp was broken. Burr looked at some papers upon his table, and said:

"I have not received word of your transfer to my command."

"Oh yes, yer have," replied Abe. "If yer'll look over the last list of names sent ter yer, yer'll find that of Caleb Winkle. There's a sartin individual who shall be nameless, who is so close to the Commander-in-Chief that they very often tech

noses, who, I thought, would be apt ter remember that A. B., Aaron Burr, and A. B., Abe Budlong, come from the same town in old Connecticut. I ain't much on larnin', as yer know, Colonel, but I pride myself on bein' consid'able on common sense. So I says to myself: 'Abe, when yer jine Gin'ral Washington's army, don't call yerself Abe Budlong, but strike out inter a new field as Caleb Winkle.' So I'm Caleb Winkle now and I'm jest as good a feller as Abe Budlong ever was."

"If you do your duty, Abe, and I know you will, for the honor of old Connecticut, it will make little difference what name you are known by," said Burr. He regarded the papers in his hand. "I see you are in Captain Dugald's company."

"Yes," replied Abe, "and I couldn't have got in with a meaner set; but I'm kinder glad of it, for yer sake, for I've come up here ter tell yer what's in the wind. Can I whisper it in yer ear? I don't care ter speak it loud, for there's a good many chinks in this 'ere buildin' and maybe there's an ear agin one of them."

When the hour of inspection arrived, Colonel Burr did not, as usual, approach his command from the front. Instead, he suddenly appeared at the right of the line, having come from the rear. With drawn sword in hand, he marched slowly down the line, inspecting each man, complimenting the soldierly and criticising the unsoldierly.

When his task was about half completed, a stout militiaman stepped out from the line and cried in a loud voice, as he leveled his musket at Colonel Burr:

"Now's your time, boys! Let him have it!"

With a deft movement of his sword arm, Burr raised his weapon and with a direct blow severed the arm of the mutineer so neatly that the limb hung only by a fragment of his coat.

“Step back into line, sir!” cried Burr, in a decided manner.

The man obeyed, and Colonel Burr moved on to complete the inspection. At the left of the line, he passed to the rear and regained his head-quarters. Upon the table he saw a package securely tied. He lifted it and found that it was very heavy. Opening it, he discovered that it contained about thirty musket balls and a small slip of paper upon which was written, in a hand well known to him:

“It was mighty hard work, Colonel, drawin’ them bullets out of them guns, but I would have worked ten times as hard to keep any harm from comin’ to you. I think them bullets look much better where they are than they would in your body.

“Yours to command, as it pleases you,

“A. B. or C. W.”



The mutiny at Valley Forge. Burr slashing the soldier.

"Step back into line sir," cried Burr. *Page 212.*

CHAPTER XVIII

“STOP!”

IT was the month of June, 1778. Sir Henry Clinton had made up his mind that it was no longer desirable to retain possession of the city of Philadelphia, and his eyes turned yearningly towards New York. Philadelphia was in reality an inland city, not easy of approach by the British fleet; but at New York, England's invincible squadrons would be close at hand and he could rely upon their assistance in case of victory or defeat. So, with his army enervated by six months of idleness and luxury, he started upon his march.

But an enemy was in the way. General Washington, with his army enfeebled by six months of cold and privation, stood ready to prevent a peaceful passage from one great city to the other. On the twenty-eighth of June the two opposing armies came into close proximity at Monmouth Court House, in the State of New Jersey.

Washington, at Valley Forge, had heard of the contemplated evacuation of Philadelphia by the British, and had sent Gen. Benedict Arnold, who was incapacitated for field service on account of his wounds, to occupy the city as soon as the British left it. This the American officer did; his advance guard marching in as the rear guard of the British marched out.

When the Royalist soldiers had entered the city six months before, they had been warmly welcomed by the Tories. It is equally true that their departure was viewed with pleasure by their old-time friends, who had witnessed with disgust the scenes of debauchery and wild license which had marked their conduct while in the city.

Sir Henry Clinton's army crossed the Delaware, seventeen thousand strong, marching in two divisions; one in command of Lord Cornwallis, and the other led by the Hessian, Knyphausen. General Washington crossed the Delaware, above Trenton, with the American army, and started in pursuit of the enemy.

General Charles Lee, who had been taken prisoner at Baskingridge, and who, after being held for two years by the British, had just been exchanged, was given command of the American advance. From a declaration of his own abilities, he had been credited by the American people with a much greater knowledge of military matters than he actually possessed; or, if he possessed it, he never used it for the material advantage of the patriot cause. His lack of self-command, amounting almost to traitorous indecision, was never so conspicuously shown as at the battle of Monmouth.

General Clinton wished to reach New York without a conflict, for he had a large band of camp followers, and his baggage, supply, and ammunition train was fully twelve miles in length. Washington's instructions to Lee had been general in their nature, but sufficiently explicit. Lee had the assistance of such brave officers as Mad Anthony

Wayne, the Marquis de Lafayette, and Gen. William Maxwell — a soldier of eighteen years' experience. As soon as General Clinton started to move, Lee's instructions were to fall upon his rear, unless he should discover grave reasons for not doing so. In the mind of no one but General Lee was there any reason for delaying the attack; but he was in command, and his indecision gave the enemy ample time to prepare for battle.

That grand old soldier, Mad Anthony Wayne, rushed forward with his men and attacked the enemy vigorously. When victory seemed assured, he received an order from General Lee to retreat, the commander saying that he had intended the forward movement only as a feint. To his other generals he gave conflicting orders, and the movement of the army came to a standstill for want of a guiding hand.

Wayne's enforced retreat in obedience to orders was interpreted by the British commander as a repulse, and he sent forward a large body of fresh horse and foot to fall upon Wayne's retreating column. At this moment, the practised military eye of the Marquis de Lafayette saw an opportunity to flank the British, and he asked permission from General Lee to advance with his command. Lee at first demurred, but the Marquis persisted so energetically, that Lee ordered him to wheel his column to the right and attack Clinton's left. But, at the same time, Lee weakened Wayne's command by taking three regiments from him, ordering them to join Lafayette.

At this point, Lee was guilty either of inten-

tional treachery or absolute incompetency; for at the very moment when Gen. Charles Scott, who had served under Braddock, and General Maxwell were ready to attack, they were ordered to retreat, and soon after, the Marquis de Lafayette received a similar command. What had promised to become a brilliant victory was then turned into a wild retreat, ending in a disgraceful rout, for the British pushed on vigorously after the retreating columns.

Washington was pressing forward to the support of Lee when he was met by the fugitives and learned for the first time of the disaster, for Lee had sent him no word of his repulse. When Washington met Lee, face to face, he cried: "My God! General Lee, what are you about? Sir!" he continued, his indignation rising, "I wish to know the reason and whence comes this disorder and confusion."

Lee replied, sharply: "You know the attack was contrary to my advice and opinion."

General Washington, his indignation almost preventing the utterance of the words, replied:

"You should not have undertaken the command unless you intended to carry it out."

Washington then assumed direction, and in ten minutes had rallied the greater part of the retreating troops. Oswald, with two cannon, was directed to take up a position on an eminence, and their effective fire soon checked the advance of the enemy. Gen. Lord Stirling also placed some guns upon an eminence, and the patriots, who, a short time before, had been a disorderly

mob, were soon lined up in battle array. General Greene took command of the right, and Gen. Lord Stirling of the left.

The battle now began in earnest. The British, about seven thousand strong, were posted upon a narrow road, flanked upon either side by morasses. The British cavalry attempted to turn the American left, but were repulsed. The American artillery, under the direction of General Knox, did great execution. For awhile the result seemed doubtful; at a critical moment, however, General Wayne came up with a body of fresh troops and gave the victory to the Americans. The British Colonel Monckton, perceiving that the issue of the conflict depended upon driving Wayne back or capturing his force, led his troops to a bayonet charge. So terrible was Wayne's storm of bullets upon them that almost every British officer was slain. Their brave leader was among the killed, falling as he was pressing forward, waving his sword, and shouting to his men. His veterans then retreated and fell back to the heights occupied by Lee in the morning.

Throughout the battle the American artillery was served with most disastrous effect upon the enemy. In order to stop the galling fire from the patriot guns, the British sharpshooters were deployed to pick off the cannoneers. Many of the gunners fell before their unerring aim.

The absolute necessity for holding the position where the cannon were placed, had drawn many of the camp followers of the American army to the support of the gunners. They were busily

employed in carrying powder and shot, and showed as much bravery as did the soldiers themselves.

Suddenly, a stalwart artilleryman, who had finished swabbing out one of the guns, threw up his hands and fell prostrate upon his face. He had been shot through the head, and death was instantaneous. No sooner had he fallen, than a loud cry was heard, and a woman rushed forward and knelt beside him. She cast one pitying, sorrowful look upon him; she remained by his side for a moment; then a look of firm determination came into her face. She sprang to her feet and rushed forward, took her position beside the cannon where her husband had so lately stood, and cried:

“I’ll take his place. I know what to do as well as he did.”

The cannon was loaded and discharged. Then the patriotic woman proved that her estimate of her own ability was correct, for her work was done expeditiously and satisfactorily. Again, and again, and again, was the gun loaded and discharged. The woman stood heroically at her post until the retreat of the British showed that victory was with the patriot forces. Then once more the heroine became the woman. She knelt beside the body of her husband, giving vent to the emotion which had been so long suppressed. The exhausted and begrimed artillerymen gathered about her and stood with bowed heads, sympathetic spectators of her grief.

News of her heroic action had reached the

Commander-in-Chief. The day which had opened with such a display of nerveless patriotism on the part of a trusted general, had closed with a picture of sublime heroism by a woman whose name, even, was unknown to him. Washington, left to himself, uninfluenced by those seeking the satisfaction of individual desires, was the personification of justice. This quality, more than his military greatness, had gained him the hearts of the American people, and it is this quality which will hold their affection and reverence while time shall last. Washington felt that the proper place to acknowledge so brave a deed was on the field of battle. So, accompanied by many members of his staff, he rode to the spot where the woman still crouched beside the dead body of her husband. The General alighted from his horse and advanced towards her.

“What is your name?” he asked.

Perhaps she did not hear, for the woman did not look up. One of the soldiers advanced, and saluting the Commander-in-Chief, said:

“Her name is Moll Pitcher. Her husband was shot down while he was working at that gun;” and the man pointed to the cannon which had ceased its death-dealing work.

“Such patriotism and heroism shall not go unrewarded,” said Washington. “Shall you go home, now that your husband is dead?” he asked, again addressing the woman.

“I have no home,” she said. “I followed my husband to the war, and I must remain with the army, for I have no other place to go.”

"You may remain with the army," said Washington, "but no longer as a camp follower. You have performed the duties of a soldier, and your sex shall not deprive you of the credit due you. To-morrow you shall be appointed a sergeant in this company of artillery."

The Commander-in-Chief remounted his horse and rode away, followed by his staff and the huzzas of the patriot soldiers who had witnessed the scene.

Colonel Burr commanded a brigade on the left, under Gen. Lord Stirling. Mounted on horseback, he dashed forward when the word to advance was given, calling on his men to follow him. This they did, giving vent to loud cheers as they rushed onward. Burr discovered a narrow bridge over the morass and determined to cross it with his men and engage the British in a hand-to-hand fight. But he was doomed to disappointment. Just before he reached the bridge, an aide-de-camp rode up and gave him an order to "*Stop!*" This was an unprecedented military command, and Colonel Burr, naturally, expostulated.

"Is it the wish of the Commander-in-Chief that I retreat?" he asked.

The aide-de-camp said the order was to "stop," and it was peremptory. There was no course left for Burr except to stand still, exposed to the withering fire of the British, who had advanced to the other end of the bridge. His horse was shot from under him. As he arose to his feet a British rifleman ran upon the narrow bridge and took deliberate aim at him; but his rifle was never



General Washington and Moll Pitcher at Monmouth.

“Tomorrow you shall be appointed a sergeant in this company of artillery.”

discharged, for he fell dead, pierced by a bullet in his forehead. For a moment he clutched at the railing; then losing its balance, the dead body fell into the sluggish stream which flowed beneath the bridge. As Burr turned, he saw Abe Budlong standing beside him, with the smoke curling from his rifle.

"I don't believe, Colonel," said he, "that them British fellers can make a bullet that'll hit yer. Leastwise, they won't if I can fire fust."

In a short time the left was reinforced by General Wayne with some fresh troops, and the issue of the battle, which had wavered in the balance, became an assured victory for the Americans.

The next morning it was found that General Clinton, with his army, had departed silently in the night, and was far on his way to New York, his baggage train having gained a day's start during the battle. The conflict took place on the Sabbath, and the weather was intensely hot. But for the incomprehensible actions of General Lee and the equally incomprehensible order given to Colonel Burr, the defeat of the British, complete as it was, might have been turned into a disastrous rout, and the subsequent course of military events entirely changed.

Exhausted by a day of arduous duty, and almost prostrated by the burning rays of the sun, under which he had been obliged to remain so long inactive, Colonel Burr threw himself upon the ground and slept soundly until ten o'clock the next morning. When he awoke, he discovered Abe Budlong sitting beside him, calmly smoking

his pipe and regarding him with a look of anxious inquiry. When Burr attempted to regain his feet, he was unable to do so without the assistance of Abe. His limbs had been chilled by their contact with the moist ground and it was with great difficulty that he was able to reach his quarters. Abe accompanied him, and after Burr had eaten, sparingly, they compared notes on the battle.

"Abe," said Burr, "this is the second time that I owe my life to you, and I shall never forget my double debt of gratitude."

"Oh, that's all right," cried Abe. "If I hadn't killed the feller, somebody else would, for there was more'n a dozen rifles panted at him when I sot my eyes on him. Yer see, I had no business to jine your rigiment anyway, but when I heerd that order given to the aide-de-camp, I jest made up my mind to desart my rigiment and jine yours."

"Did the Commander-in-Chief send that order to me?"

"Well," said Abe, slyly, "the one that sent it ain't exactly Commander-in-Chief, not jest yet; but I kinder reckon he thinks, if he had his desarts, that he'd be Commander-in-Chief, and as Gin'ral Washington wouldn't be jest the kind of clark that would suit him, I rather fancy Washington would lose his job and have to go back to old Virginny and hoe terbaccer for a livin'."

CHAPTER XIX

COWBOY AND SKINNER

AFTER the battle of Monmouth, Colonel Burr's physical condition, instead of showing signs of improvement, gradually grew worse. The army doctors thought it a wonder, considering his long exposure to the heat, that he had not been sun-struck; but they all agreed that his vitality was reduced to such a low ebb, that further active service, for the time at least, would be impossible.

Burr rebelled strongly against their professional decision. It was upon such glorious battlefields as that of Monmouth that he wished to live, and, if necessary, give his life, in defense of the cause which he had espoused. But if he had wished to appeal from the decision of the doctors, his common sense told him that it would be useless; for in his weakened state he felt that he was unfitted to satisfactorily perform the duties which devolved upon him. In his letter to the Commander-in-Chief, requesting a furlough, he showed plainly that he had become a patriot from no mercenary motive; in fact, he made it a condition of accepting a furlough, if one was granted, that he should receive no pay while off duty. General Washington's reply was equally explicit and fully as magnanimous.

“ HEADQUARTERS, FREDERICKSBURG,

“ Oct. 26, 1778.

“ DEAR SIR : I have your favor of the twenty-fourth. You, in my opinion, carry your ideas of delicacy too far, when you

propose to drop your pay while the recovery of your health requires your absence from the service. It is not customary and it would be unjust. You therefore have leave to retire until your health is so far re-established as to enable you to do your duty. Be pleased to give the colonel notice of this, that he may know where to call upon you, should any unforeseen emergency require it. I am, your obedient servant,

“G. WASHINGTON.”

But Burr could not accept a furlough on this understanding. He had made a condition in asking for it which the Commander-in-Chief had not seen fit to accept, and Burr's pride, as well as his patriotism, would not allow him to receive compensation for services which he had not rendered. Instead of telling his colonel where he could find him, he proceeded at once to Haverstraw and reported for duty.

Sir Henry Clinton, exasperated by his losses, and believing that a conciliatory policy would only add to the arrogance of the rebels who had arms in their hands, determined, henceforth, to carry on the war upon a system of cruelty and plunder, disgraceful to himself and to the country which he served. Baylor's Dragoons were surprised at night, near Tappan, and indiscriminately slaughtered. Pulaski's Legion met a similar fate at Egg Harbor. Nor were these barbarities confined to men who had taken up arms in the cause of the Colonies. Peaceful citizens were remorselessly butchered, helpless females were outraged, and little children driven out, houseless, into the winter's storms. No part of the country witnessed more of these horrors than Westchester County, in the State of New York. From the very begin-

ning of the war, the divisions among its inhabitants had caused it to be overrun, now by Whigs, now by Tories, and now by armed banditti, who served whichever party promised, at the time, the greatest amount of plunder and the greatest license to cruelty.

It was here that the "Cowboys" and "Skinners," as they were called, held high revel. The Cowboys of the Revolution were Tories, and British sympathizers; the Skinners were Whigs, professedly in sympathy with the patriot cause. Neither organization confined predatory operations to its enemies when the defenceless storehouses or fields of their supposed friends supplied opportunities for plunder.

Scenes of rapine and lawless violence had increased to such a degree toward the close of 1778, that, in the language of an eye witness, "no man went to his bed but under the apprehension of having his house plundered or burned and himself or family massacred before morning."

The British forces in New York City made frequent incursions into the country, which was at all times overrun by their spies and emissaries. To counteract these evils and punish those who committed the outrages, different American officers had at various times been stationed upon the lines of Westchester; but all had acquired the universal proclivity for plunder and murder, and had, themselves, become no better than marauders. General McDougall, who had taken command of the district of which Westchester County constituted a part, resolved that this state of affairs must

come to an end — that the plundering parties from New York should be met and driven back — that the inhabitants who remained peacefully at home should be protected, and British emissaries arrested and punished.

With this idea in mind, he sought an officer upon whom he could rely to carry out his energetic purposes. In making his selection, he disregarded the claims of rank, and overlooking several others who imagined they were entitled to a preference, called Colonel Burr from Haverstraw and appointed him to the command of the lines from the Hudson to the Sound, a distance of fourteen miles, with headquarters at White Plains. In his order appointing Colonel Burr to the post, General McDougall gave still further proof of his unbounded confidence in the valor, the discretion, the activity, the humanity, and the justice of Colonel Burr. After enumerating many points to which he wished particular attention should be paid, he added, in reference to all doubtful cases: "I authorize you to be sole judge." Thus, at the age of twenty-three, Colonel Burr was vested with almost unlimited power in the command of one of the most important military situations in the country.

On the day of his arrival at his future headquarters, he found his predecessor preparing to set out on an expedition, the ostensible object of which was to watch the movements of the enemy near New Rochelle. Ill-advised and injudicious as Colonel Burr regarded this enterprise, he did not feel authorized to interfere further than to

enjoin upon Colonel Littlefield a strict regard for the rights of property and a careful observance of military discipline on the march. The scouting party was gone the entire night, and the next morning, after Colonel Burr had formally assumed the command, he was mortified at seeing them come into the post loaded with plunder. The license of the time and of the place had made robbery so much a matter of course, that there was no attempt at concealment. The stolen articles were openly deposited in a heap to await an equitable distribution among the robbers.

Very early that morning, something had occurred to give Colonel Burr a premonition of what he might expect to see when the party returned. It had also given him time in which to decide what course he would follow if the information given proved to be correct. He was always an early riser, but before he left the pallet upon which he had thrown himself an hour after midnight, after devoting the evening to a careful consideration of the peculiar conditions by which he was surrounded, a letter had been brought to him. The handwriting seemed somewhat familiar, but the name signed to it, Simeon Willetts, was unknown to him. As soon as a hasty toilet was completed, he gave orders that the bearer of the letter should be admitted.

He ought to have been surprised, but, in reality, was not, when he saw the round, good-natured visage of his old friend, Abe Budlong. The latter was not in military uniform, but wore the costume of an ordinary farm laborer.

"Well, Abe," was Burr's salutation, "what are you up to now? Have you come to play the guardian angel? Is there another mutiny on foot?"

Disregarding Colonel Burr's inquiries, Abe chuckled. "It's good fer sore eyes, Colonel, ter see yer lookin' so spick an' span. I heerd about yer askin' fer a furlough, and as yer left soon arter, I 'sposed yer got it. Then, one o' the cap'ns told me yer wouldn't take pay fer doin' nothin', and I told him that's jest like Aaron. I wasn't feelin' very well myself, and as there wasn't any pertic'lar fightin' goin' on, I axed fer a month's furlough, and got it. I shan't be squeamish about takin' my pay, either, fer all I git fer a month's sojerin' won't more'n buy the next month's terbaccer. I heerd yer was up here, so I thought I'd come up and make a call."

"I am glad to see you, Abe," said Burr, "but I thought you brought this letter."

Abe laughed. "Well, I did. I had ter git up some kind of a trick. The fellers on guard were so darned pertic'lar that they wouldn't let Abe Budlong inside the lines. I've bin stoppin' with a Whig farmer, named Cyrus Willetts. He said he was 'lowed ter go up ter headquarters, so I thought I'd borrer part of his name, and it worked to a T."

"I can forgive you, Abe, for your subterfuge," said Burr, "but I shall not pardon the sentinel who allowed you to pass. Every man who is permitted to come to headquarters is provided with a pass, signed by me, and a countersign. As you had

neither, the sentinel was remiss in his duty and shall be reprimanded."

"Now, don't be too hard on him," said Abe, and he burst into a loud laugh. "When yer know the hull story, it'll be jest like yer ter promote him to fust sergeant. Yer see, I didn't show him the letter at all. I sneaked up ter the lines, and as soon as he sot eyes on me, he challenged me. I told him my brother was a Tory and that I was one, too; that Timothy, my brother, had been taken by you fellers and locked up; that our dad was at the pint of death and I wanted ter go and tell him. So the feller sent fer a guard and they brought me up here; but when I got ter the guard-house I told the officer I had a letter fer yer that was important, and fer him to hold on ter me tight till you'd read it."

Burr's face did not relax a muscle during this recital, but when Abe finished, he joined in the laugh in which the companion of his youthful days indulged.

"But what did you wish to see me for?" he asked.

"Well, yer see," said Abe, "I found out where that scoutin' party of yourn went ter last night. They didn't go to fight any Tories, but spent their time robbin' an old man, named Gedney. There ain't no doubt but that Gedney is a Tory at heart, but even so, he hain't done no fightin', and they tell me, hain't given any aid to the enemy. I thought perhaps it might be well fer you ter find out jest where they had been, and I thought if yer knew——"

"I am greatly obliged to you, Abe," said Colonel Burr. "Your information will be of great value to me in dealing with the officers and men who have been engaged in this unlawful expedition. I say unlawful, for I gave the commanding officer explicit orders to avoid pillaging. How long is your furlough, Abe?"

"I've had a week," was the reply. "I've got three more on my hands and don't know what ter do with 'em. Can't you make me useful 'round here somewhere? I hate ter loaf, and I hain't got time ter go ter Connecticut and git back agin."

"I will provide for you," was the reply. "I must go now. By the sounds I hear, I think the robbers must have returned. If you see anything that ought to be done, Abe, do it;" and with these words, Abe was left to his own devices.

At sight of the heap of plunder, Colonel Burr's feelings of delicacy towards his predecessor vanished. The whole property brought in was at once seized and placed under a guard of his own selection. Then he approached the commander of the expedition. He looked upon this as an opportunity to impress the men and the citizens with the full conviction of his unflinching determination to protect the defenceless, and restore peace and order to the community.

"From whom were these articles taken?" he asked.

"From the enemy," was the officer's reply.

"I have information to the contrary," said Colonel Burr. "I regret the necessity, but you and your men must consider yourselves under

arrest until the exact truth of the matter is arrived at."

He next sent for a detachment of men and some army wagons. He ordered the robbers to place the articles in the wagons. When this work was completed, the order to march was given and the entire party proceeded to Gedney's house.

From the lips of the old man, who had not yet recovered from his terror, Colonel Burr learned the full extent of the outrage which had been committed, not only as regarded property, but also upon the defenceless members of the family. He called up several members of the band of pillagers and they were forced to confess that Gedney told the truth.

The course of action which Colonel Burr had decided upon, he carried out to the letter, never wavering in the exaction of every portion of his contemplated programme. The first scene in this drama of real life was afforded by the spectacle of the robbers—and the commanding officer was obliged to do his share—restoring to Mr. Gedney all articles and materials which had been taken from him. The robbers were then ordered to pay to him full compensation for such articles as had been lost or damaged. Third, he compelled each man to present Gedney with a sum of money, as compensation for his fright and loss of time. Next, he obliged each of them to ask pardon of the old man and promise good behavior in the future. The next morning the final scene in the drama was enacted. In those days the lash was generally resorted to in all commands to enforce military

discipline, and in accordance with the custom of the time, each of the robbers received ten lashes on his bare back.

All these actions were taken with the utmost deliberation and exactness, and the effects produced by them were magical. Not another house was plundered, not another family was alarmed while Colonel Burr commanded the Westchester lines. The mystery and swiftness of the detection, the rigor yet fairness with which the marauders were treated, overawed the men whom three campaigns of lawless warfare had corrupted, and restored confidence to the people who had passed their lives in terror.

Colonel Burr's feelings justify analysis. As a military man, he felt insulted because his orders had been disobeyed; as a man, he felt indignant that soldiers under his command should have inhumanly treated women and children; as a patriot, he was grieved and sick at heart that men who had sworn to be true to the cause of freedom should have voluntarily descended to a level lower than that of ordinary thieves.

CHAPTER XX

A CHIVALROUS COURTSHIP

COLONEL AARON BURR, commander of the Westchester lines, laid down his quill. He had just signed a number of military orders and was considering the names of the officers to whom they were to be committed for execution, when his attention was attracted by a sudden exclamation, which proceeded from the farther end of the room. There sat Abe Budlong, apparently engaged in furbishing his rifle.

"What's the matter?" inquired Burr. "Are you getting ready for a fight with the enemy?"

"Well, no," drawled Abe, "not 'zactly. The fact is, I jest laid down that hammer on my thumb and it hurt like mighty. Yer know, Aaron, I've told yer a good many times that I'm not much of a fighter. I b'lieve in moral suasion, and I b'lieve it does more good, in the end, than shootin' and slashin'."

"Then why did you go into the army, Abe?" inquired Burr; but he repented the question as soon as he had asked it.

"Wull, seein' as yer've fergotten, Aaron, I'll tell yer. When I lived in Litchfield, I got acquainted with a young feller and I grew ter like him fust rate, and I always fancied he took ter

me. Wull, he went ter war and I had ter follow him."

"Yes, yes," said Burr; "it was very thoughtless of me to ask that question. I know why you are here and I shall never ask you that question again. But you always act bravely when you are in battle."

"Oh, that's nat'ral," was the reply. "Even rats'll fight if they git cornered. Fightin's all right when you come out on top, but it makes a fighter feel kinder down in the mouth when the other side does the crowin'. I can't git the taste of that Quebec affair out o' my mouth. I told the boys then, and I have said it a hundred times since, if they had 'lowed you to use them 'ere ladders, you'd 'ave got inter the city all right, Dick Montgomery would be a-livin' now, and Benedict Arnold would 'ave been the biggest man in America."

"The march through Maine," said Burr, "was an ill-advised one. If the troops had gone up through Vermont to Montreal, making that a rendezvous, and from there had marched to Quebec, there might have been a different result. But that would have put two ambitious generals side by side in command of the same force, which condition of affairs would probably have been as fatal to success as the efforts of the enemy."

Abe kept up the polishing of his rifle until it shone like a new shilling. Suddenly he asked:

"Say, Aaron, what do yer think of Washington as a gin'ral?"

"Washington is above criticism," was the reply.

"I do not mean to say by that, that some of his actions do not deserve it, but the great mass of the people look to him as their deliverer from British rule. When a permanent government is established, be the ruler a king, or president, or consul, or whatever he may be called, George Washington will be the man."

"And I say it's all right, too," said Abe. "He's a mighty good stayer. When I was a boy, I used ter do a good deal of fightin' with my fists, and I made it a rule ter jest let the other feller whack away at me as hard as he could, till he got red in the face and kinder winded, and then I used to spunk up and thrash him to his heart's content. I think, if I'd been a gin'ral, I'd 'ave been another George Washington."

While Abe had been talking, Colonel Burr had written some names upon the military orders which lay before him, and summoning an orderly, directed that they be transmitted at once to the respective officers.

Abe, having completed the cleaning of his rifle, placed it in a corner of the room, and had his hand upon the latch of the door, when Burr said:

"Abe, how would you like to make a trip through the enemy's country and run the risk of being hanged as a spy?"

"If Colonel Aaron Burr, of the United States of America, thinks it'd be an edifyin' spectacle ter see Abiel Budlong hung by the neck from the branch of a tree, the aforesaid individual is ready ter take his orders and run the necessary risk."

"Well, the fact is, Abe," said Burr, "that the

duty is a personal, instead of a public one. I am very anxious to get a letter to a lady who lives in Paramus, in New Jersey, and to receive a reply before night."

In an instant, Abe had taken possession of his rifle, and advancing to the table at which Colonel Burr sat, saluted and stood awaiting orders.

"Do not take your rifle," said Burr; "that would subject you to suspicion at once. You might carry a pistol, to be used if you find it absolutely necessary, but you will need wit more than gunpowder to perform this mission successfully. If you start at once and meet with no serious interference, you will probably be able to reach camp again by five o'clock this afternoon."

Colonel Burr took a letter from beneath the pile of papers. Abe held out his hand to receive it. "Shall I git an answer?"

"The answer will be verbal," was the reply, and will consist of one word only. It will be 'Yes' or 'No.'"

"Well, I reckon," said Abe, "if there's a lady in the case, yer won't be very glad ter see me if the answer is 'No.'"

Colonel Burr smiled. "If the answer were to be 'No,' and a final one, I should hesitate about sending you upon the mission. I should recall the incident of Capt. Miles Standish and John Alden. No, the matter is not quite so far advanced as that, yet; but it is only fair you should understand the situation. The letter is to the mother of a lady for whom I entertain feelings of the highest admiration and respect. I wish to visit the

lady's daughter, but can only do it at an unconventional hour. If the mother is willing that I should come, the answer will be 'Yes;' if she considers it inadvisable, the answer will be 'No.'"

Burr passed the letter to Abe, who looked at it wonderingly. "There ain't no name on it," he said, finally.

"I know that," said Burr. "It was omitted advisedly. The letter might fall into the hands of the British, and there are good reasons why I do not wish these ladies thought to be in correspondence with a rebel leader."

"All right," said Abe; "if the name isn't too long, I guess I can remember it."

"The person to whom I wish you to deliver it is Mrs. Anne Stillwell Bartow. Everybody in Paramus knows her, and you will not have to make more than one inquiry in order to ascertain the location of the Hermitage, the name by which her house is known. Pick out a good horse, keep your pistol within easy reach, use that big fund of common sense with which all Connecticut men are endowed by nature, and I shall see you again before the sun sets."

It was exactly quarter past five when Abe Budlong again stood in the presence of Colonel Burr. The latter looked up inquiringly.

"Wull," said Abe, "if that 'ere lady you sent me to turns out ter be yer mother-in-law, I don't think yer'll have no trouble with her. She's a mighty quiet sort of a person and takes things so nat'ral like that I ventured ter ask her if she warn't born in Connecticut."

Burr knew Abe's peculiarities too well to object to the preliminary conversation, although he was anxiously awaiting the monosyllable for which the journey had been undertaken.

"She read the letter through three times, fer I kept count, and then she asked me to excuse her and she went inter the next room, and I heerd women's voices, and then one of 'em laughed — I guessed which one that was — and then she come back, and she said 'Yes' jest as quiet as though I'd asked her for the loan of a dozen eggs and promised ter bring 'em back the next day."

Burr sprang to his feet. "There is no time to lose!" he cried. "Abe, as I told you, that word 'Yes' settles the matter. I am going to Paramus to-night. I am going to have an interview with Mrs. Bartow's widowed daughter, Mrs. Prevost."

"I guess that was the one that laughed," said Abe, with a chuckle.

"No, I think you are wrong. My opinion is that it was Miss Devisne, who is a half sister of Mrs. Prevost. Mrs. Bartow has been twice widowed. Her right name is Devisne, but I thought it best to ask for her by the name of Bartow, as that would give the impression to any one whom you might question, that you knew very little about her and had probably come from a long distance to see her."

"Yer've a long head, Aaron," said Abe, "and yer ought ter be a major-gin'ral before yer git through. But I tell yer, Aaron, it's a mighty long ride down there and back, and I come pretty close, two or three times, ter runnin' inter some squads

of Tories, but I made up my mind before I started, that if my hoss's heels would save me, I wouldn't do any fightin'. But what can I do fer yer now?"

"I am not going the way you did," said Burr. "I have my plans all arranged. I shall not leave camp until after I have inspected the outposts for the night. I shall not reach Paramus before one o'clock in the morning. By Mrs. Devisne's kind permission, I shall remain for an hour. I shall reach camp to-morrow morning in time to inspect the outposts at the usual time."

"By George Washington!" cried Abe, "that's what I call makin' a night of it. Jest ter think of only one hour's courtin' and six hours' travelin'. Why, when I used ter go courtin' in Litchfield, it didn't take me no more'n fifteen minutes ter git there, and half an hour ter git home, and I used ter stay from seven t'leven."

"I want you, Abe, to pick out six good men and six good horses. You will make the seventh and I the eighth of the party. We will start at ten o'clock. I have my plans all made and will give orders as they are needed, from time to time. I shall depend upon you to see that they are carried out to the letter."

"Yer've hit on jest the right man fer the job," said Abe, as he saluted and departed to carry out his commander's orders.

That night, at ten o'clock, the little party of eight left camp quietly. About half past eleven they reached a point on the river where it had broadened, forming a little cove. Burr descended from his horse, which was a small, wiry pony, and

taking some leathern thongs from a package which had been fastened to his saddle, told his companions to throw the horse and tie his fore and hind legs securely. This being done, a couple of heavy blankets which Burr had brought with him were spread upon a large raft found concealed in the cove. The horse was lifted by the men and placed upon this somewhat luxurious couch. Some long poles were discovered in a small thicket near the river bank, and the ferriage across the river was soon accomplished.

The prostrate animal was borne to the land, the thongs removed, and after a proper length of time had been given him in which to recover the use of his benumbed muscles, Burr mounted him and rode rapidly in the direction of Paramus, first giving orders to Abe to moor the raft in the shadow. He also advised him and his companions to keep out of sight as much as possible, until they heard the sounds of his horse's hoofs, which would be the signal of his return.

"That is," said Abe, "s'posin' there's no other feller round ridin' a hoss at this time o' night, which I reckon ain't very likely nor probable."

Burr's parting words were: "If, when you hear me coming, there is any sign of danger, fire a single shot and then cry 'Halt!' as loudly as you can. I shall understand, and will proceed warily after hearing it."

The men showed no signs of uneasiness until the sound of the hoofs of Colonel Burr's horse died away in the distance. Then one of them said, addressing himself to Abe:

"I say, Cap'n, it's mighty cold here. I've got a bottle of rum with me, and if you've no objections, me and the boys'll take a drink."

"Wull, I've got objections, and decided ones, too," said Abe. "I don't b'lieve a good soldier drinks when on duty, 'specially if the life of his commander may be lost if he gits drunk and don't know what ter do when the time comes."

The man grumbled a little, but did not take the bottle from his pocket. Half an hour later, he said:

"I say, Cap'n, 'tis mighty cold. Can't we get some of those branches together and make a fire?"

"It might be a good idea," said Abe, "if we wish to attract the attention of the enemy and have them come down on us in a body. As I've got a nice, pretty girl down in Litchfield, Connecticut, whose name is ter be Mrs. Abiel Budlong one of these days, I'd rather go home as a live body than as a dead carcass."

The uneasy man kept quiet for a short time longer. Then he approached Abe:

"I say, Cap'n, I'm about frozen. Have you any objection to my takin' a run up the river bank and back, just to warm me up?"

"Yes, I have," said Abe. "I'm under the orders of my superior officer and you're under mine, and now you jest come back inter the thicket with the rest of us fellers and keep quiet."

"Well, can't we have a smoke while we're waitin'?" the man persisted.

"No, you can't," said Abe. "There's nothin' that shows the presence of a man any quicker

than the smell of terbaccer smoke, and 'the wind which bloweth where it listeth,' as the Good Book says, may take it right into the noses of the enemy."

It was well that Abe had been so persistently cautious. "Hist!" he said. Then, in a low whisper, to one of the men: "My ear is keen, and if I ain't deucedly mistaken, there's somebody comin' this way. Now jest lay low and keep your eyes peeled."

Abe and his men were concealed in a small growth of trees not far from the river bank. They were not more than twenty feet from the raft, which lay in the shadow of a cliff some twenty feet high, along the base of which was a pathway five or six feet wide. The cliff, no doubt, originally had reached to the river bank, but heavy storms and spring freshets had worn it away, still leaving the path at its base. The moon was partly obscured by clouds, but there was sufficient light for Abe and his men to see that three human forms were approaching, and the light was bright enough, or, rather, the uniforms were bright enough for them to discern that they were Britishers, wearing the traditional red coat.

"Let's give 'em a volley," said the uneasy man, in a whisper to Abe.

"When I say 'Fire!' you can do it," was Abe's response.

The three British soldiers came slowly towards the hiding place of Abe and his men. They were evidently looking for something, and finally one of them cried:

"Here it is! Here is the raft! That's where he came across!"

"But how did he get the horse over?" asked one of the men.

"Oh, that's easily explained," said the first speaker, who was a lieutenant. "He made the horse swim across while he poled the raft."

"Well, we'll help him upon the return trip," said the second speaker, with a laugh.

The moments now seemed like hours to Abe and his men. They were in a state of intense suspense, and even the uneasy man grew quiet from the very force of circumstances.

"As he is on horseback," said the lieutenant, "we shall hear him long before he gets here and shall have plenty of time to conceal ourselves until I give the word to rush forward and secure him."

Abe and his men were cramped in their close quarters and envied the Britishers, who strolled leisurely up and down the river bank. Both parties were listening for the sound of the horse's hoofs, and soon it was heard. Abe was on the alert. The sound came nearer. His beloved friend and revered commander could not have been more than two hundred feet away, when Abe discharged his rifle, and in a voice of thunder, cried:

"Halt!"

The lieutenant unsheathed his sword with a clatter, while the two soldiers who accompanied him cocked their muskets and awaited—they knew not what. The report of Abe's rifle, the tones of his voice, and the sound of the horse's

hoofs had ended simultaneously. The lieutenant then realized that their expected victim must have been accompanied—but by how many? If he had brought but one man to watch the raft, the odds were still in their favor, for they numbered three to two. He had not long to wait for the *dénouement*. Kind nature brushed away the clouds from the face of the moon, and a flood of silver light fell upon the river, raft, and thicket, disclosing to the astonished gaze of the lieutenant the forms of seven men, wearing the Continental uniform, and the glistening barrels of seven rifles, which shone brightly in the moonlight.

“Throw down yer arms, or we’ll fire!” cried Abe. “If yer don’t, yer’ll all be dead men in less than a minute.”

The lieutenant’s sword and the soldiers’ muskets were deposited in the pathway.

“Fall back!” cried Abe, and the Britishers obeyed him.

“Halt!” he cried, when there was a distance of ten feet between them and the weapons which they had surrendered. The order was promptly obeyed.

“Now, Jim Liscomb,” said Abe, turning to the uneasy man, “yer’ve been mighty anxious ter do somethin’ that I didn’t want yer ter do, ever since we’ve been here, and now yer jest come out and pick up that sword and them muskets; but bear in mind the fact that each o’ them fellers has probably got a pistol, and jest as yer comin’ back with ’em, they’ll be likely to shoot yer in the back.”

Like all men of his stamp, Jim Liscomb was

more of a braggart than a hero. Still, he was not a coward; but he knew that his companions would consider him one unless he promptly obeyed the order. He picked up the sword and muskets, but he could not refrain from looking over his shoulder as he quickly made his way to the thicket with the trophies of war.

"Forward, march!" cried Abe, and the lieutenant and the two soldiers advanced. The order was obeyed in a twofold manner, for Budlong, followed by his men, met the captive British soldiers half way.

"What's your name?" asked Abe.

"John Sugden;" said the officer; "Lieutenant John Sugden of His Majesty's Twenty-first Regiment of Foot. Whom have I the honor of addressing?"

"I'm Cap'n Abiel Budlong, at present unattached, but actin' as aide-de-camp to Colonel Aaron Burr, in command of the Westchester lines. Johnson," he continued, turning to one of his men, "go 'round the edge of the cliff where it's easy to climb up. If yer see Colonel Burr, tell him ter come along. Everything is all right."

In a short time, Colonel Burr rode into the midst of the party. He looked at the British soldiers and then turned to Abe.

"Time hung a little heavy on our hands, Colonel," said Abe, "so we bagged a little game while yer was gone. These fellers must 'ave got wind of yer trip in some way and they laid a little trap fer yer, but our trap was bigger'n their'n, and so we've cotched 'em. What shall we do with 'em?"

Burr thought for a moment; then he said: "Better dismiss them on parole. The raft is not big enough to take them and our party, including the horse, across the river."

"Beggin' your pardon, Colonel," said Abe, "I think we can manage it. He's a poor soldier who won't learn somethin', even from his enemy, and this 'ere lieutenant here—by the way, Colonel Burr, allow me ter interduce Lieutenant John Sugden of His Majesty's Twenty-first Regiment of Foot—as I was sayin', this 'ere lieutenant here, when he thought nobody heerd, talked out loud and said yer must have swum the hoss acrost the river while yer poled the raft. Now, I kinder think Lieutenant John Sugden and his two soldiers won't take up any more room than the hoss and me did, and if yer'll guarantee ter git 'em acrost the river, I'll take care of Abe Budlong and the hoss."

At five o'clock the next morning, Colonel Burr, accompanied by Abe Budlong, six Continental soldiers, and three British prisoners, reached the American camp. Colonel Burr, without allowing a moment for rest, immediately began the morning tour of the outposts, returning to breakfast at seven o'clock. By that time the news of the capture of the British soldiers had spread through the camp and even reached the outposts. Not a man, excepting those who had composed his escort, had the slightest suspicion that the trip had been devoted to a chivalrous courtship. All thought that it was a cleverly planned scheme, concocted to capture the three Britishers who were now prisoners in the guardhouse.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BLOCKHOUSE

COLONEL BURR was not yet ready for active operations against the enemy. He wished, first, to accustom his men to the restraints of a wholesome discipline, as well as to make his own position perfectly secure in every respect. For this latter purpose, he established a system of sleepless vigilance and organized a corps of patrols and videttes so effective that it was impossible for parties of Cowboys or British troops to move in any direction without his immediate knowledge. In this he was greatly aided by the country people, who, satisfied that they had at last found a protector, repaid him tenfold by freely and promptly communicating every kind of information that might aid his operations.

To the common soldiers he had now become an idol. His unwearied exertions to procure them shoes, blankets, and other comforts, his tender solicitude for the sick and wounded, the unvarying urbanity of his deportment, and his perfect readiness to endure whatever he required others to undergo, created an enthusiastic love for him as a man, that was only surpassed by unbounded confidence in his military abilities. The very strictness of the discipline he enforced made his other qualities stand out prominently, and

they respected and loved him more, from the fact that they dared not trifle with his orders. Brave men they could find anywhere—humane men, though not so abundant, were yet no rarity; it was the union of courage and humanity, animated by tireless activity, and regulated by the highest intelligence, that seized upon their affections, and in their eyes invested the young officer with the attributes of a demigod.

In numerous encounters with small parties of the enemy, Colonel Burr had good opportunities for testing the mettle of his men, and he was gratified to observe that they feared no danger and counted no odds when he was their leader. As soon as he was fully satisfied that they could be relied upon in any emergency, he resolved to employ them on a more dangerous service than any in which they had yet been engaged.

In the lower part of the country, the British had erected a blockhouse as a rallying point for their foraging and plundering parties. This was protected by a strong body of several thousand troops, posted some two or three miles off. To destroy this blockhouse would be to deprive them of a safe and convenient place of retreat, and increase the danger of their forays to such an extent as to make it probable that they would be abandoned altogether.

Burr had, according to his custom, carefully inspected the work and the grounds about it, and only waited for a dark and rainy night to put into execution the plan which he had formed. It was not long before the weather proved as propitious

as he could desire, and selecting forty men, properly equipped and instructed, just after night-fall he began his march for the scene of action. At two o'clock in the morning he arrived in the vicinity of the blockhouse. Here he divided his force into two parties, the one commanded by a captain to whom his instructions had been previously communicated, and the other by himself.

The garrison was buried in sleep, and the shivering sentinels were more intent upon protecting themselves from the bitter blasts of a Northern winter than in looking out for an enemy of whose presence they did not dream. Suddenly the thick darkness was illuminated by flashes of light, and a voice rang out loud and clear upon the night air. It uttered but a single word — "Charge!"

There was a simultaneous rush, short ladders were planted against the blockhouse, showers of hand grenades were thrown through the port-holes, and the drowsy garrison started from their slumbers to find themselves surrounded on all sides by fire. The assault had been too sudden and too well planned to admit of effectual resistance, and the British soldiers, instead of flying to their arms, yelled lustily for quarter, which was at once granted.

The ruddy hue painted upon the heavens by the burning blockhouse gave early notice at the British camp of the danger of their friends, and a strong body of horse, followed by another of infantry, was dispatched without delay to their assistance. But long before they could reach the

scene, their enterprising foe, with all his prisoners, was safe beyond the reach of pursuit. A heap of burning coals and blackened stones greeted their arrival, but no human being was left to point out the pathway of the destroyer.

As the thoroughly frightened British soldiers marched from the burning blockhouse into the darkness of the night, they were met with stern commands to "Halt!" and this warning was promptly complied with.

If Colonel Burr had brought with him for the capture of the blockhouse his entire force of forty men, the problem of properly securing his prisoners and conveying them to the American headquarters would have been a comparatively easy one; but the fact was, he had brought only thirteen of his men with him, leaving a reserve of twenty-seven men posted fully a mile from the scene of action. Burr reasoned with himself that if twenty-eight American soldiers had been captured by thirteen Britishers, the Americans being unarmed, while their captors were fully equipped, the odds, after all, would not be so desperate. The proportion would have been two unarmed men to one with arms. If a conflict had taken place at close quarters, he considered it not improbable that the twenty-eight Americans could have managed to wrest six or seven guns from their opponents, when the conditions would have been reversed, and in all probability the captors would have become the captives.

While almost certain that the phlegmatic British soldiers would not attempt a hazardous

experiment which a body of venturesome patriots would have considered sure of success, he did not feel inclined to begin the march of a mile in utter darkness, through thick forests and across a river which had to be forded, unless some effectual means were first taken to prevent either the escape of the prisoners or a concerted attack by them upon his own men. If there had been moonlight, the difficulties of the trip would have been greatly reduced; but the sky was overcast and there was every indication of the approach of a severe storm.

The picture was dramatic. The crestfallen prisoners had been drawn up in the form of two sides of a square, fourteen men to a side. Some ten feet back from the ends of the incomplete triangle thus formed, stood the thirteen Continental soldiers, with their muskets ready for instant use, should occasion offer.

Abe Budlong stood like a statue regarding the scene. The glare from the burning timbers of the blockhouse lighted up the picture, the red coats of the captives looking like two blood-red lines converging to a point, while the blue coats of the Continentals took on a brighter hue beneath the reflected light.

Colonel Burr stood aloof from the party, near a pile of glowing embers, studying the situation. He had formed no definite plan of action. Suddenly, Budlong approached him and saluted. They were beyond earshot of the others, and Abe adopted that friendly conversational manner which he always assumed under such circumstances.

"Say, Colonel," he began, "I know what yer thinkin' about and I've got an idea."

Burr did not speak, but kept his eyes fixed upon the bright blaze before him.

"It's none of my business," Abe continued, "to give advice to my superior officer, but I ain't speakin' now to Colonel Burr, commander of the Westchester lines, but to my old friend Aaron."

These last words aroused Burr from his reverie, and turning to Abe, he asked:

"What is your plan? But, before you speak, Abe, remember that these men are prisoners of war and must be treated as such. If they had been Cowboys, I do not think I should have listened to their cries for quarter quite so readily."

"Oh, I don't mean to hurt 'em," said Abe. "It's a kind of a joke I want to play on 'em, but it'll git us out of our fix. It'll hurt their feelin's and they'll feel pretty sheepish when we git 'em inter camp, but my plan won't hurt a hair o' their heads."

"Well, what is it?" asked Burr, dropping the conversational tone and assuming once more the air of command. Abe involuntarily saluted his leader.

"My idea, Colonel, is ter make those Britishers take off their red coats and we'll chuck 'em inter the fire, as it's too much work for us ter lug 'em back ter camp. Then, make each man take off his galluses and give 'em to one of our men. We shall have no objection to the Britishers puttin' 'em on agin after we reach camp."

The full significance of Abe's plan suddenly

burst upon Colonel Burr, and he broke into a hearty laugh.

“Order the British soldiers to remove their coats and gallowes,” he commanded.

Under Abe's direction the order was carried out and the line of march was soon formed. Some pine fagots were cut and lighted from the blazing embers. Two Continentals went ahead, holding these improvised torches high in the air. Next came four American soldiers, as an advance guard. Behind them marched the twenty-eight captives, arranged in open order, fourteen in each line. On either side marched two Americans, while three Americans composed the rear guard. In the centre of the hollow square thus formed, were Colonel Burr and Abe Budlong, one keeping his eye upon the line of prisoners on the right and the other upon the line of prisoners upon the left.

The captives were obliged to hold their breeches in position by both hands, and any motion indicating an intention to remove them, caused an immediate warning to be given by the nearest guard.

Abe's scheme proved entirely successful, and within an hour the reserve guard of twenty-seven men was come up with. Burr's first impulse was to release his prisoners from a position so uncomfortable and ludicrous, but Abe suggested that it was best to push on as they were, for although the guard was much larger, if the prisoners should make an attempt to break away, some of them would surely escape in the darkness.

The first rays of the morning sun were light-

ing up the tents and log houses which formed the American camp, when this odd procession reached it. The victorious Americans were greeted with cheers by their brother officers and soldiers, and to the credit of the men be it said, no shouts of derision or peals of laughter greeted the unfortunate captives.

One of Colonel Burr's instructions to his officers and men had been to treat prisoners of war who had fought fairly and surrendered honorably, as they would wish to be treated were they in a similar position.

CHAPTER XXII

A SECRET MISSION

THE official military career of Colonel Burr was now drawing to a close. The disease contracted by his exposure on the field of Monmouth had terminated in a confirmed and settled malady, under the debilitating effects of which he was rapidly sinking. Heretofore, the regularity and abstemiousness of his habits had been of essential service in enabling him to undergo the hardships he had imposed upon himself; but constant exposure, in spite of all the precautions of prudence, did its work at last. The opening of spring, to which he had looked for his probable restoration to health, brought with it increased debility, and he became painfully conscious that he was no longer able to perform his duties in the manner to which he had been accustomed, and in which he would alone consent to discharge them. On the tenth of March, 1779, with deep regret and after long hesitation, he transmitted his resignation to the Commander-in-Chief.

The reply of General Washington to this communication shows plainly the high opinion which the Commander-in-Chief had of the military ability of Colonel Burr.

“MIDDLEBROOK, 3d April, 1779.

“SIR: I have to acknowledge your favour of the 10th

ultimo. Perfectly satisfied that no consideration, save a desire to re-establish your health, could induce you to leave the service, I cannot, therefore, withhold my consent. But in giving permission to your retiring from the army, I am not only to regret the loss of a good officer, but the cause which makes his resignation necessary. When it is convenient to transmit the settlement of your public accounts, it will receive my final acceptance. I am, etc.,

“GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

No one ever left the service of his country under circumstances more creditable to him, as an officer and as a man, than did Colonel Burr. He found upon the lines of Westchester a discontented, disorderly, and demoralized rabble, who hid behind their intrenchments at every appearance of a British force; who made no distinction in their marauding expeditions between friend and foe, and plundering indiscriminately the unoffending and the guilty.

In a short time he converted them into a well-behaved, disciplined, almost invincible corps. Not once did the enemy approach his lines without being met and repulsed; not one soldier deserted his standard; not one was made prisoner during the whole period of his command. It was his pride to teach them that a soldier with arms in his hands had no apology for surrendering.

He found a distracted and bleeding people, shivering at every blast and trembling at any unusual noise, in fearful expectation that the robber and the spoiler had come to take away the little they had left. Hating the Continentals as cordially as they did the Redcoats, since both oppressed them alike, they murdered with equal

satisfaction the one or the other whenever a safe opportunity occurred.

He left them secure in their persons and property, sleeping as peacefully within hearing of the enemy's guns as if they were a hundred miles removed, devoted to the patriot cause and zealously exerting themselves to promote it.

He found the country overrun by British emissaries and spies, who kept the British general in New York continually advised of every movement of the American forces above, thus enabling him to strike whenever and wherever our troops were least prepared to receive him. These emissaries were detected and punished with such unerring certainty, that in a brief while no reward could induce one of them to venture beyond the British posts. The enemy's sources of information were thus entirely cut off, and they were kept in such total ignorance that they dared not hazard a movement of the least importance. From the lines of Westchester, Colonel Burr repaired to Newburgh, where he remained for some time the honored guest of General McDougall. Oppressed by mental anxiety even more than by physical suffering, he lingered for weeks on the very verge of the grave. At last his temperate habits triumphed, and the healthy current began to creep slowly back into his shrunken veins.

In the month of June, the British, in large force, made threatening demonstrations against West Point, and General McDougall, justly alarmed for the safety of the place, sought by every means to open communications with Gen-

eral Washington; but this was a work of no ordinary difficulty, for the British had so posted bodies of Tories on the roads and among the mountain passes, as to render the destruction of any small party or the capture of a single messenger almost inevitable.

General McDougall made repeated efforts to send intelligence to the Commander-in-Chief, but all proved abortive. When these facts came to Colonel Burr's knowledge, feeble and emaciated as he was, he volunteered to undertake what so many had failed to accomplish. The general at first remonstrated, but finally yielded to Burr's urgent solicitations, and giving him only verbal instructions, dispatched him on his journey.

Well armed, and mounted on a good, strong horse, he set out early in the morning on his dangerous mission. One afternoon, towards night-fall, when approaching one of the most difficult passes in the mountains, he saw a man emerge from the bushes a few yards in advance of him and turn leisurely up the road, giving, apparently, little heed to the horseman of whose presence he could not fail to be aware.

The man was dressed in the common garb of the country, and carried no visible weapon of any kind. Those were days when prudent men seldom went abroad unarmed, but Burr inwardly thought, that if any one were justified in neglecting that precaution, it was the powerful figure before him. Not more than five feet six inches in height, his shoulders were of Herculean breadth, and over his ample chest the bones were laid in

thick, curved plates, that would have bidden defiance to the hug of a Norwegian bear. His thigh was so long as to amount almost to a deformity, and over it was twisted a network of muscles as hard as, and much more elastic than steel. The short space between the knee and the ankle joint was almost entirely filled by the swelling calf, while the broad feet looked like the pedestals of a mighty statue.

He raised his head when Colonel Burr rode alongside, and exhibited a countenance that would have been singularly pleasing but for the fierce light which flashed from his dark hazel eyes.

"Good-evening!" he said in a natural, unaffected tone. "Do you travel far on this road?"

"Perhaps so," was Burr's reply, "and perhaps not."

"Shy, eh! Shy and skittish. That looks bad," the man remarked.

"Why so? These are not times, nor is this a country in which a man can safely tell his business to every person he may chance to meet on the highway."

"Well, there is some truth in that; it was none of my business, anyway," the stranger replied.

But, although thus disclaiming any interest in the motions of his companion, the sturdy footman kept within grasp of the bridle rein, quickening or slackening his pace to suit the gait of the animal. Burr did not fail to notice, that, move as he would, the relative distance between them was always the same. His quick eye, too, had detected the butt of a heavy pistol beneath the coarse frock-coat

worn by the countryman, and he doubted not that other weapons were concealed beneath the same cover. Believing from these indications that the purpose of his new acquaintance was in no way friendly, he thought it advisable to bring on the struggle at once rather than to allow his adversary the selection of his own time and place.

“What is that?” Burr suddenly asked, pointing to a stunted beech tree on the mountain side.

The man turned his head for a moment, and only for a moment, but it was enough. Burr reined his steed sharply back, and snatching a pistol from his holster, leveled it at the head of his pertinacious companion, at the same time sternly demanding:

“Who are you, and for what reason are you dogging my steps?”

The pistol was double charged; it was held by a hand never known to tremble in the hour of danger; the least motion of his arm, the scraping even of a foot, and the giant pedestrian would have been launched into eternity. His eye caught that of Burr, as he turned, and his own fierce gaze sank under the overwhelming power of that steady look which no living thing ever encountered unmoved. It was not anger that flashed from those large orbs, nor courage, nor determination merely, but all these combined; and, added to them, was a nameless spell which carried with it an irresistible conviction that whatever they threatened was certain to be performed. It was a glance of doom; there were no chances to be taken, no wavering, no hesitation to be hoped for. The man's whole

soul was aroused; all his energies were alive and active. The bold, strong animal quailed in the presence of a master-spirit, and in a tone resembling the whining growl of a bear, he answered :

“ My name is Alexis Durand.”

“ That is little to the purpose,” said Burr, sternly. “ Answer me truly, or your lease of life will be a short one. Are you not one of Tryon’s Tories?”

“ I suppose I have no choice but to own it. I am.”

“ That is enough. I can imagine the rest without your help. Unbutton that coat !”

The order was sullenly obeyed, and the open garment revealed a belt containing two pistols and one of the broad hunting-knives of the day. By successive orders, Colonel Burr compelled him to draw out first one pistol, then the other, and finally, the knife, and to drop them at his feet. This done, he ordered him to march forward five paces, counting the steps and following the man as he advanced; then, he made him lie down on his face until he leaped from his horse and secured the weapons. This done, he again mounted his horse and ordered the Tory to rise.

“ Where is your troop now?” asked Burr.

“ Three miles ahead, in the woods at the back of Jordan’s house,” was the reply.

“ Who is Jordan?”

“ He is a Tory, and keeps the only public house on the road.”

“ That, at least, tallies with my own information; pray remember, in your answers, that I did

not come here in entire ignorance of anything it concerns me to know. I shall most certainly detect you in any attempt to deceive me, and then your fate is sealed. Will any of your troop be prowling about before dark?"

"Not on this side. I was sent to watch here."

Burr mused a moment, and then said: "Now, Mr. Alexis Durand, I propose to sup this night at Jordan's, and as I do not like solitary meals, I shall take you along for company. As much, however, as I love the society of a single friend, I object decidedly to larger parties, and if any unpleasant intruders should join us, or any other circumstance should occur to mar the festivities of the evening, my dissatisfaction will be instantly manifested by sending a brace of bullets through your skull. You understand me, I hope. Now, forward, march!"

They had proceeded in this way for a little more than half a mile, when they came to a place where a bridle-path led off from the main road through the woods. Here his prisoner indicated a wish to halt, and Burr, reining up, inquired what he wished.

"I should like to ask you a question, sir, that I hope you will not refuse to answer. I know I am in your power, and you may do as you will; but I swear by all that is holy, that it shall do you no harm to tell me truly whether or not you are Colonel Aaron Burr."

"I do not think I should attach much importance to your oath if I did not myself feel certain that it can make no difference whether you know

me or not. I was Colonel Burr, but I have resigned my commission and left the army."

"Then, for God's sake, go no farther on this road!" cried the man.

"Why, you told me just now it was free as far as Jordan's house."

"So it is; but your horse would not be in the stable five minutes before it would be known by those who would compass earth and hell to spill your blood."

"Your care for my blood," answered Burr, coldly, "has wonderfully improved in the last hour. I think it is not very long since you had some such purpose as murder in your own heart."

"I did not know you then, and I suspected you of being one of McDougall's spies."

"And now that you know me, I cannot understand what has produced so marked a change in your praiseworthy intentions. I am not generally held in high esteem by my country's foes."

"You saved my father's house from being burned; you set a watch over it to protect my mother from insult, and you fed her starving little ones when you knew us to be friends to King George and enemies to Congress. I am the son of John Durand, of Westchester. Have you forgotten him?"

"No, my good fellow, I remember him well. I recall, also, since you have brought it to my mind, that his eldest son was accounted a confirmed robber and murderer; and while I protected your father and mother as an act of justice, and fed your little brothers and sisters as an act of humanity, I

should have taken singular pleasure in hanging you to the first tree that offered."

"I did not begin it and it is not my fault if there has been a long and bloody account run up between me and those who drove me to take up arms when I was willing to remain in peace with the old folks at home. But there is no time to talk it over now. The sun is going down. Will you trust me and follow me? Believe me, there is no other escape from death."

"I will trust you," answered Burr, without the least hesitation. "Lead on. I think you mean well, and if you do not, my hand will be as steady and my aim as certain in one place as another."

Durand turned into the bridle-path and walked rapidly on until they were entirely out of sight from the highway, and also out of hearing. Here, again, he paused until Burr reached his side.

"I am taking you," he said, "to the house of a friend of mine, who is, of course, in British pay. There will be no use in telling him anything we can help, and therefore I should like to ask another question or two. Where are you going?"

"To General Washington's headquarters," was Burr's reply.

"So I suspected. Do you bear dispatches?"

"No, I have only a verbal message."

"That is safer and better. Bill Jenkins's cabin is less than a mile from here; there you can have your horse fed, get your supper, and some sleep. After that, I will myself guide you safe beyond danger. I shall call you Mr. Jones, for although I do not fear any treachery from Bill, it is not

wise to tempt him too far. Give me back my arms; an angel from Heaven could not make me hurt you now, and besides averting Bill's suspicions, it may be necessary to use them in your defence."

Colonel Burr promptly complied with his request, rightly judging that he had already trusted him too far to hesitate about granting him an additional confidence. Durand replaced the weapons in his belt, and again moved forward with a quick and nervous step.

In a short time they reached a clearing on a level part of the mountain, surrounded by a high, strong fence, in which were three or four cabins, irregularly placed and so nearly alike that it was difficult to tell which were designed for the use of man and which were for the cattle and poultry that lowed and cackled within. The owner of the premises, who was engaged in the task of milking a cow, had a villainous look, and the natural repulsiveness of his countenance was increased by an ugly scar, extending from above the left eye across the nose to the right cheek. He put down his milk-pail and walked to the gate, at the summons of Durand, silencing, as he did so, two large wolf-hounds, that were growling and barking furiously at the intruders.

"This, Bill, is my friend, Mr. Jones," said Durand, after shaking hands. "He wants some supper and a night's lodging, and I have brought him here, knowing that you would give him a hearty welcome for my sake."

"To be sure!" answered Jenkins, extending

his horny hand to Burr. "I'm glad to see you, sir, and though I haven't much, you're welcome to what's here. Aleck," he continued, "take your friend into the house and build a fire. He looks sick and weakly, and these mountain dews are mighty chilly. I will take care of his horse."

"Rub him down well, Bill," replied Durand, "for he will have to travel hard in the morning. Take your time. I will get supper for you."

Jenkins led off the horse, and Durand entered the house, followed by Burr. It was a square, one-story log cabin, covered with boards. Over the joists, for about one-half the length of the room, loose boards were laid, forming a kind of upper room, which was reached by a rough ladder, and was used as a general depository for any and everything that the owner desired to put out of the way. The floor was of earth. Above the fireplace, suspended in racks made of forked sticks, were a long rifle, a British musket, and three or four pistols of different sizes and makes, showing that they were never intended to match, and indicating pretty plainly that the mode of their acquisition had not been entirely honest. In fact, they had been picked up here and there in the different forays of the present owner, and to some of them tales of murder as well as of robbery were attached. One chair and four or five stools were scattered about. In the centre stood a rude, square table. In one corner was a rough bed; in another a pile of blankets and counterpanes, together with a miscellaneous collection of other bedclothing, which never came there through fair

traffic. By the door was a shelf for the water-pail, and near the chimney stood a large cupboard made of pine plank, its door fastened by a wooden button. There was no window and no other furniture.

Durand had brought in a dry board, which he split into pieces over a large stone that did duty as an andiron, and raking the embers together, soon succeeded in blowing them into a flame. While he was thus engaged, Colonel Burr had been noting everything in the house, and he now asked:

"Does your friend live here alone?"

"Not exactly. I am with him a good deal myself; but if you mean to ask whether he has a family, I answer no. Men like us have no use for women-folks about the house. It is bad enough to be harried and burned out when we are alone, without being maddened by hearing the women screaming and the children crying, besides."

"True," answered Burr, "and there has been too much of that on both sides in this unhappy war. I have tried to put a stop to it wherever I held command."

"You did, sir; and you owe it to that, that you are now safe and sound beneath an outlaw's roof, instead of being bound and bleeding in the hands of men who are dead to the prayers of mercy. You thought you had me in your power, sir; and while we were upon the highway, maybe you did; but the moment you had passed Jordan's gate, nay, in the very act of getting from your horse, if your eye had turned from me one instant, you

would have been lost. A blow given with half the strength of this arm would crush your ribs like rotten pipe-stems, and it is certain that I should have found some chance to deal that blow. It was your eye, sir, that saved you. I remembered my mother's description, and I knew you by that."

"I am thankful the trial was spared us," Burr replied, "though I am not so certain that you, an unarmed man, could have made me a prisoner when fully armed and on my guard. We will let that pass, however, for the present, and as I have, perhaps, been trusting you more than prudence dictates, while you have given me no information of your plans and intentions, you will excuse me for questioning you upon some things which it is important for me to know."

"Ask me nothing, if you please, sir," said Durand, interrupting him. "I know where you want to go and I intend to conduct you there in safety, or die in the attempt; but I shall be no more a friend to George Washington and his cause when that is done, than I am now. At the same time that I serve you for protecting my mother and her children, I remember that it was against your friends that protection was necessary, and I have no idea of sparing the whole pack because I have found a noble hound among them. Do not ask me anything and do not tell me anything. Draw that chair nearer to the fire; it is always cold up here at night. I must get about supper."

The meal and the manner of preparing it was one for which Burr's experience, notwithstanding his military life, furnished no parallel. Taking

down a small iron kettle which was suspended from a cross-piece in the chimney, Durand filled it with water and hung it immediately over the blazing fire; then opening the cupboard, he took from it the leg of a goat which had been cooked, but only partially eaten. This he cut into small pieces and put in the pot. To this he added some slices from a side of bacon, two pods of red pepper, an onion cut fine, some hard biscuit broken into pieces, and a handful of Irish potatoes peeled and sliced thin. All were stirred together, having been first plentifully sprinkled with salt.

By this time, Jenkins had returned. Producing a candle which he lighted, he next drew a stone jug from underneath his bed, and invited his guests to partake of some "real old Jamaica" — an invitation to which Durand did double honor; and Colonel Burr, fatigued by his ride, swallowed a larger quantity of the potent spirit, according to an after acknowledgment, than he ever did at any other time in his life.

Durand was the first to rise from the supper table. "You must excuse me, Bill," he said; "I am going to camp and will not be back until after midnight. Finish your supper, put plenty of wood on the fire, and go to bed. The sooner the better for my friend Jones. Bar the gate and fasten the door; do not open either for man or devil until I return. Call the dogs into the house. They will help you bravely if you are hard pressed."

"What if any of our boys should come along?" inquired Jenkins. "How can I turn them off?"

"They will not; but if they should, pretend

not to know them and shoot the first one that crosses the fence. Mark me," he continued, observing the astonished stare of his companion, "if Governor Tryon himself knocks at this door to-night, his welcome must be a rifle-ball. I will explain to-morrow. Good-night!" With these words, he stepped from the door and was soon lost among the tall bushes which grew in rank luxuriance along the mountain side.

What were the sensations of Colonel Burr when thus left alone with the ill-favored man of crime beneath whose roof he was so strangely sheltered? To fear, he was a stranger; but was there no doubt, no mistrust, no anxiety? Not a particle. If there had been any purpose to harm him, he knew that purpose could have been accomplished a hundred times over. For hours he had been in their power. There was no necessity for treacherous scheming to effect either his death or capture. Durand's good faith he could not question, and Jenkins had not given him the slightest cause to harbor suspicion. Thus far he had done precisely what his comrade had told him, and had carried out his orders in such a way as to make it certain that no sinister design influenced him.

Nothing of this was lost upon Colonel Burr, and after Durand's departure, he took his seat composedly by the fire and began caressing one of the large wolf-hounds that reclined lazily at his feet, while Jenkins was bringing in some additional logs to heap in the chimney. After this, Jenkins placed two strong bars across the



Burr in the outlaw's cabin before the fire.

Jenkins . . . taking a seat, entered into friendly chat with his guest.

door, and taking a seat, entered into friendly chat with his guest upon subjects that offered no chance for party disagreement. At that period of the American Revolution it was not always safe to ask, much less to answer questions, and Jenkins was too well aware of the fact to trouble his visitor with impertinent queries. What he did say was friendly and his manner was wholly unembarrassed.

The dogs, even, seemed to understand that the stranger was to receive none but kindly treatment, for one of them, when he had finished his bone, laid his huge head upon Colonel Burr's knee and looked wistfully up into his face, as if soliciting a caress. Colonel Burr was passionately fond of a good dog and an excellent judge of his points. The deep chest and sinewy loin of the noble animal supplied him with a subject for conversation, until Jenkins arose, and saying it was time they should go to bed, spread blanket upon blanket, and counterpane upon counterpane on the floor, until he had made a pallet as soft as a bed of down, upon which he invited Burr to lie and rest until Durand's return. He then sought his own couch, and the dogs unceremoniously disposed themselves at Burr's feet.

It was long past midnight when Colonel Burr was aroused by fierce growls from his four-footed sentinels. The same sounds awoke Jenkins, who, springing from his bed, silenced the dogs by a stern whisper, "Hush, Brute! Lie down, Cash!" and walking to the door, placed his head against it to listen. The sound of a horse's hoofs upon the rocky path was heard, and soon afterward Alexis Durand shouted at the gate:

“Open, Bill; it is I!”

When the door was opened and Durand had entered, Burr discovered that he had added a rifle, together with a bullet-pouch and a powder-horn, to his equipment. His manner, too, was hurried, like that of a man whom some danger threatened and who was impatient to be gone.

“It is later,” he said, “than I hoped it would be, before my return. I had trouble to get away and we may meet with more on the road. Get Mr. Jones’s horse, Bill; we have no time to tarry here!”

The horse was brought, and after bidding Jenkins a cordial good-bye, the two mounted and rode down the mountain side in a direction nearly at right angles with the road. From the many turnings and zigzags made by his guide, Colonel Burr soon lost all idea of the exact direction in which they were travelling. Now, they were winding among huge masses of white, rugged rocks; now, the bed of a mountain torrent crossed their way; now, a deep ravine, black and gloomy, barred their passage; anon, they were skirting the base of a frowning precipice, and again climbing a steep ascent which rose sharp and sudden before them. Colonel Burr could discover no sign of a path, but his conductor rode on, avoiding or surmounting obstacles with an unerring certainty that proved his perfect knowledge of every foot of the ground. Toward daylight they descended into the plain, and just as the sun was rising, emerged from a thick wood in full view of a broad and beaten road. Here Durand reined up.

“You are safe, Colonel Burr — beyond the danger of meeting with our scouts.”

Burr turned towards his preserver and said in a voice shaken by an emotion which he did not attempt to suppress:

“Mr. Durand, you have rendered me a great service, and I thank you from my heart. Not, however, for the life you have probably saved, for of that I take little heed; but it concerned my honor that the message I bear should be safely delivered. Is there nothing I can do to repay you?”

“I was paid in advance. The man who saved my mother from insult has a right to work me in a chain-gang if he chooses.”

“That was an act of common humanity, for which I deserve no particular credit,” replied Burr.

“It was a rare one, sir, in these times; and when I forget it, I hope the lightning may strike me. We Tories are human beings, although your Whig friends seldom treat us as such. We have had much to make us bloodthirsty, lawless, and revengeful; and we have, therefore, done much at which good men must shudder; still, we are better than you give us credit for being, and gratitude is not an unknown feeling among us.”

“Of that I have had ample proof,” said Burr. “I wish you would let me show my own by procuring for you a full pardon for all past offences, with permission to remain peacefully at home, or join the American standard, as you may prefer.”

“You speak in kindness, Colonel, and I hope you will not think I meet it rudely in saying that

this good rifle is all the pardon I need. As for joining the American standard, I may think of that when I forget the wrongs I have suffered at American hands."

"That there has been wrong on both sides, I know," Burr rejoined, "but surely those who are in arms against their own country could not expect to be used very leniently."

"Your historians, Colonel, will tell one story, and ours another. If you succeed, yours will be believed; if we triumph, you will be the traitors. The judgment of posterity upon our motives will be worth just nothing at all; but if an account of the facts could be written precisely as they are, an impartial jury would say that we have been at least as much sinned against as sinning.

"Take, for instance, the case of Bill Jenkins, under whose roof you slept last night. At the beginning of these troubles he was just married, and there was not a more quiet, orderly, industrious young man in the colony of New York. He believed honestly and conscientiously that King George was entitled to his allegiance, and refused to join the Rebellion. This subjected him to insult and after a while to worse. He was dragged from his bed at night, tied to a tree, and lashed like a condemned thief, until the blood ran down to his heels. His young wife looked on the horrible scene till she fainted, and died the next day; her babe, scarce a week old, was found dead in her arms. Do you wonder that from that day Bill Jenkins became a house-burner and a murderer? Do you wonder that he forgot to

distinguish between those who had wronged him and the party to which they belonged, and inflicted vengeance on all alike?"

"No," assented Burr, "but his is an extreme case; there are very few who have his excuse."

"Not many, perhaps, who have suffered so much; but all of us have suffered in some way and all of us have more or less to avenge."

"Your way of stating the case is a strong one, Mr. Durand, when addressed to the ignorant and the unreflecting; but a man of your education and intelligence must understand that this is not a personal quarrel. It is a question of freedom—of freedom for the whole land and for our whole posterity. There may be a dozen, or ten dozen, or ten thousand bad men among us, who commit wrongs and outrages upon their fellow-men in the mere wantonness of cruelty; but that does not affect the justice of the cause any more than the bad conduct of a hundred thieves changes the foundations of society. You have no more right to take up arms against your country because a Whig has robbed your house, than you have to become a robber because you have been cheated in trade.

"You must remember, too, that the things of which you complain were, in a great measure, brought upon yourselves. If you had taken sides in the beginning openly and boldly for your country, you would not have been molested. It is no answer for you to say that you honestly believed your country to be in the wrong. It is not a case for reasoning about right and wrong.

If you saw a strong man beating your mother, I do not think you would trouble yourself to inquire what provocation she had given him. So in this case, your country is engaged in an unequal warfare, and whether she is right or whether she is wrong, the arms, hearts, and swords of her sons are her legitimate property. Before the war began it was your privilege to use argument, reason, and persuasion, if you chose, to prevent it from breaking out; but when it did come, when the blood of your neighbors and friends was poured out like water upon their native fields, patriotism, honor, duty, manliness, all demanded that you should raise your hand on the side of the oppressed."

"We have no time now to argue the point, Colonel, and we should probably be as far from agreeing at the end of the discussion as we are now. It is not safe for me to linger here. Good-bye, and if ever you should meet my mother, tell her that her son obeyed her commands and paid a part of her debt. Tell her, also, that I shall keep on paying it whenever a proper occasion arises."

"At least," said Colonel Burr, extending a large seal ring as he spoke, "at least, accept this, and promise me that if ever you get into trouble you will not fail to let me know it."

"Gladly do I accept the ring," replied Durand, "but as for the promise of applying to you in any coming trouble that may overtake me, you must pardon me for not giving it. It will depend upon circumstances, and of those circumstances I must be the judge."

Colonel Burr extended his hand—the sturdy

outlaw almost crushed it in his iron grasp; then, drawing his sleeve across his eyes, as if to wipe away something misty that had gathered there, he turned his horse into the wood and rode rapidly back towards the Highlands.

CHAPTER XXIII

“ INDEPENDENCE ”

AFTER the outlaw, who had been his friendly guide, had disappeared from sight, Colonel Burr turned his horse's head to the southward, which direction, he knew, would soonest bring him to General Washington's camp.

The first streaks of morning light were showing themselves in the eastern horizon. A gray mist lay over hill, and dale, and road, to be burned away in time by the heat of the rising sun. As he rode on, it seemed to Burr as though he had just passed through the “ Valley of the Shadow of Death ” and was now on his way to a haven of happiness. To add to the illusion, as he spurred his horse onward, bright gleams from the rising sun shone upon grass, and flower, and tree, and he could hear the songs of birds all about him.

For several hours he rode on without meeting a single human being. To be sure, he saw many human habitations, but they were not near enough to the road over which he was travelling to have his presence attract the attention of any one, nor did he have an opportunity to closely inspect the inhabitants of the houses.

At about eight o'clock he began to feel hungry. His appetite was soon satisfied, for the thoughtful Durand had supplied him with some meat and

bread. Then Burr thought that a drink of cool spring water would be refreshing. There were no signs, however, of any such natural beverage, and he spurred on his horse, hoping that he would soon reach a village where his wants could be satisfied.

Suddenly he came upon a young countryman at work in a field. He had a rake in his hand and was evidently gathering up the aftermath, for the grass had been cut quite closely. Reining in his horse, Burr asked:

“Can I get a drink of water in this vicinity?”

“Guess there ain’t none much nearer than the river,” was the reply. “There’s plenty in that, if the Britishers haven’t stole it. They’ve taken ’most everything else.”

“Are there any of them near here?” asked Burr.

“Wull, not jest this minute. A squad of them cum up to our place yesterday af’noon and levied on all the hay we had and stole the only hog we had left. Dad had gone to the village with the hoss, an’ our cow was so far off in the field that the Britishers didn’t take the trouble to go after her. There ain’t much use scrapin’ up this ’ere hay, but it’s all we’ve got left and we hain’t got any money to buy any more.”

Burr counted out twenty dollars in Continental money and passed it to the young fellow. “Take that,” he said; “I would give you more, but I may need what I have left before I reach the end of my journey.”

“The young man drew back. “I wasn’t a-beggin’ when I told you that story,” he said.

"I know that," was Burr's reply, "but we are on the same side and it is my duty to help my friends to the best of my ability. I can spare it, and you have the best right to it, for you need it more than I. Besides, you can do me a great service — worth more to me than the money I have given you. I think I can trust you."

"Wull, I rayther think you can. I don't believe you love the Britishers any more than I do. What can I do for yer?"

"The truth of the matter is," said Burr, "I am on my way to General Washington's camp, and wish to reach there at the earliest possible moment. I am fairly well acquainted with this country. I know that I have to cross a river. Now, where can I find a ferry, or the best fording place?"

The young fellow scratched his head. "Wull, the best fordin' place is up to Johnson's," he said, pointing in the direction from which Burr had come, "but I guess you've found out that it warn't safe to cross there. The next ferry is Williamson's, but I heerd yesterday that the Britishers had killed the old man and carried off his boat. The next chance you'll have is at Townsend's Furnace, but whether you'll find anybody there is more'n I can tell."

"How far is it to Townsend's Furnace?" asked Burr.

"It's a good eighteen mile," was the reply, "and jest the toughest road you ever struck. It's as hard as forty mile on a straight road. You seem to have got a good hoss, but you'll have to be careful of him jest the same."

Thanking the young man for the valuable information which he had obtained, Burr started off at a gallop. The horse, like himself, seemed happily affected by the brightness of the morning and the fact that their long journey was nearly at an end.

A glance at the deserted ferry landing at Williamson's showed Burr that the young countryman's story was true. His horse now began to show signs of fatigue and to betray an inclination to walk slowly. But there are times when the physical comfort of beasts is of minor importance when compared with great ends to be secured, and Burr felt that at whatever cost to himself or the animal which bore him, Washington's camp must be reached before nightfall.

The ferry at Townsend's Furnace, like that at Williamson's, had no boat—in fact, for that reason it was not a ferry. There was only one thing to be done; the river must be forded, and he forced his horse into the swiftly flowing current.

Refreshed somewhat by the cold water of the river, the horse struck out valiantly for the other side, but Burr soon saw that the animal's strength was failing, and throwing himself into the river, he swam towards the farther shore, encouraging the horse to follow him. Both succeeded in reaching the bank of the river, but the ascent was precipitous and the weakened animal stumbled and fell, with difficulty regaining his feet. The village was a mile from the ferry landing. Would the horse be able to carry him there, or should he be obliged to walk?

“Well done, Cæsar!” he cried, patting the faithful animal on the neck; “you shall have a chance to rest and to get some breakfast by the roadside.”

An hour later, Colonel Burr, mounted upon Cæsar, rode into the little square in the village of Townsend’s Furnace, upon which fronted the foundry, the village store, the schoolhouse, and the church. It was well that he had reached a haven of refuge, for just as he prepared to rein up, his horse again stumbled and fell, nearly throwing his rider over his head. It took but a short time to learn that the modern Cæsar, like his illustrious predecessor, had fallen to rise no more. Burr was in a dilemma. He must proceed at once; but had he enough money with him to buy another horse?

News travels quickly, even in a country village, and a short time only elapsed before some thirty residents, young and old, and of both sexes, were gathered about the dead animal, hazarding guesses as to the cause of his death.

“Friends,” said Burr, “I have been unfortunate in losing my horse. He has borne me nobly and has died as gloriously for his country as if he had been a man and had fallen upon the field of battle. I am the bearer of dispatches to General Washington and it is absolutely necessary that I should proceed on my journey at once. Who will sell me a horse?”

There was a dead silence for at least a minute, during which time Burr glanced inquiringly at the upturned faces before him. Finally a man spoke.

“Well, I guess,” said he, “any one of us would

be willing to accommodate yer if we had a hoss ter sell, but the fact is, the Britishers made a foray a few days ago and carried off every hoss in the place. They would 'ave taken Independence, too, but he knocked 'em galley west and kicked up so permiscus-like that they let him alone; but he's the only four-footed critter in Townsend's Furnace that can be hitched to a cart or carry a man on his back."

"What is this Independence?" asked Burr.

"Why," said the man, "it's a mule, and the doggondest, ugliest critter that ever walked on four legs. The fact of it is, when any one tries to ride him, he don't walk on four legs, but stands on two most of the time."

At this description of the performances which had been witnessed by every inhabitant of the village, those present indulged in a hearty laugh.

"Who owns this mule, and will he sell him?" was Burr's next query.

An old man, wearing a suit of brown homespun and a three-cornered hat, spoke up:

"I own the mule, or I have for the past two years, and he's been the cuss of my life. He's kicked over three hencoops, broken down two pigpens, and there ain't a day goes by that I don't have to mend a fence. Counting timber and labor, that mule has cost me more'n a thousand dollars. I've tried to give him away, but nobody would have him. If you want to buy him, you can have him at your own price; but you do it at your own risk, and if he kills you, I call upon my neighbors here to bear witness that I warned you agin him."

A price was fixed upon and paid over, and four of the men went in search of the animal in order to deliver him to the purchaser. With a stout rope about his neck, with kicks and cuffs, the mule "Independence" was led into the presence of Colonel Burr.

"Here he is," said his former owner, "and me and the town will be glad to git rid of him."

Independence submitted quietly to having the necessary preparations made for the trip. He undoubtedly thought that he would not display his powers so early in the game. They could be more effectually shown after his new owner was seated.

Burr jumped upon the animal's back, grasped the reins, and in a kindly manner signified his desire that the mule should move on. But Independence was so used to being urged forward by stronger and harsher means, that he paid no attention to the milder request. Burr repeated his command in a louder tone, but the mule was obdurate. The onlookers began to snicker. They evidently expected when the mule did start forward, that his rider would go over his head. Burr next prodded the beast vigorously with his spurs. This was a new sensation to the animal, and forgetting his determination to remain quiet, he gave a leap forward; then realizing that by doing so he had compromised himself, he started at a brisk run, but not in the direction that his rider intended that he should take.

The village of Townsend's Furnace was more than a mile from the river. It would have been

built on the bank of the river but for the fact that the coal required for the foundry was that distance from the stream, and of course the most economical plan was to locate the foundry in the closest proximity possible to the coal field. The village road lay at the foot of the hill, which it was necessary to ascend in order to reach the mine. Against the side of this hill a framework of wood had been erected in the form of a right-angled triangle turned upside down, the hypotenuse being supplied by the side of the hill. The coal was brought from the mine in wheelbarrows, wheeled on to this wooden framework, and dumped through a large opening which had been cut for the purpose. The ascent of the hill was precipitous, being at an angle of forty-five degrees with the roadway.

Up this steep incline went Independence, lifting his heels high in the air, with the evident intention of unseating his rider. In this he was unsuccessful, and when the mule reached the top of the hill he found to his astonishment that his burden was still upon him.

Whether or not a mule thinks, may be an open question, but all who are acquainted with the species will acknowledge that the devices he adopts to rid himself of a rider indicate the possession of a brain as great as that of a senator. Like Warsaw's last champion, Independence surveyed the hill beneath him and saw the crowd of laughing villagers enjoying his discomfiture. When a mule has conceived an idea, he is not slow to act. Independence conceived one and he proceeded

at once to act upon it. Down the hill he went at a furious pace towards the wooden framework. Did he stop when he reached it? No, on he went, until he came to the opening through which the coal was dumped. Did he stop or sheer to one side then? Not at all. Down through the hole he went, with his rider upon his back. When the mule's feet struck the coal, it began to roll beneath him, and down went mule and rider to the bottom of the pile, both man and animal covered from head to foot with coal dust.

But Independence had met his match and he knew it. He had exhausted his ingenuity, but his rider was still upon his back. Again he felt the prodding of those terrible spurs. There was evidently no way to avoid a repetition of that horrible sensation but to become tractable and move forward down the road, just as a well-intentioned horse would have done. Amid the cheers of the villagers, Colonel Burr rode away from Townsend's Furnace upon the back of the now docile mule and was soon lost to sight.

It needed little use of voice or spurs to urge Independence forward after they were beyond the confines of the village. His busy brain may have been hatching up some scheme to end in the unseating of his rider, but he thought it impolitic to betray his intentions just at that time. Colonel Burr could have wished for no fleeter-footed steed for the first three miles of their journey. Then something happened which led the rider to bring the mule to a full stop. This he did by a pull upon the bridle, that threw the animal upon his haunches.

Upon the steps of a small cottage built quite close to the road, from which it was separated only by a small garden, was a little girl about three years of age, crying bitterly.

"What is the matter, little girl?" asked Burr.

The child looked up. Her eyes were red with weeping, and when she attempted to speak, her voice was choked with sobs. Burr did not think it prudent to alight from the mule, or he would have taken the little one in his arms, caressed her, and learned the cause of her sorrow; so he repeated the question. This time he got an answer.

"They've took mamma away," sobbed the child.

Burr knew it was useless to ask for any long explanation, so he said, simply: "Which way did they take her?"

The child pointed in the direction in which Burr was going.

"I will find your mother for you and bring her back to you, dear," were his words, as he once more drove the spurs into the mule's sides.

Independence could not resist this admonition, and jumped forward. On they went at full speed for at least a mile, when Burr thought he heard a woman's screams. Drawing one of his pistols, he examined the priming to see that the weapon was in condition for immediate use. A moment later they reached a bridle-path running through the woods. A sudden turn in the path showed him, not more than two hundred feet ahead, two redcoats mounted upon powerful

horses, which they were urging forward at full speed. Behind one of the soldiers sat a woman. It was evidently she who had uttered the screams which had reached Burr's ears, and she was undoubtedly the mother of the little girl who was bemoaning her loss.

The woman saw Burr. He made a signal, by lifting his hand and bringing it down, to indicate that she should throw herself prone upon the back of the horse. She understood it and at once complied. Now was Burr's opportunity. He was a good shot, and taking careful aim, fired; the British trooper, shot through the heart, reeled, and fell from his horse. Drawing his other pistol, Burr held it in readiness in case he should be attacked by the other trooper. The soldier turned and saw Burr and his extended pistol at the same moment. Next, his eye fell upon the body of his dead companion. He was not made of strong stuff, for instead of trying to avenge his companion, he spurred his horse on vigorously and was soon lost to sight beyond another turn in the road.

The woman was brave and self-reliant. As soon as her abductor fell from the horse, she managed to reach the saddle, grasp the bridle, and bring the steed to a standstill. When Burr, mounted upon Independence, reached her, they surveyed each other with mutual astonishment — she, because her rescuer presented, after all, a rather grotesque appearance, mounted upon the back of the mule; he, because of the courage and spirit shown by the woman. He dismounted and assisted her to alight.

"Are you injured?" he asked.

"No," was the reply, "but I am faint and weak."

Her actions did not belie her words, for she would have fallen to the ground if Burr had not supported her.

"How did you come to follow me?" she asked.

"Or did you simply come upon us by chance?"

"It was no chance," Burr replied. "Your little daughter was sitting upon the steps of your home, crying, because her mother had been taken away. I told her I would find you and bring you back to her. I have found you, but I hardly see how I can fulfil the rest of my promise, for I am obliged to proceed upon my journey at once. When I reached Townsend's Furnace, my horse fell dead beneath me, and the only means of conveyance I could procure was this mule, which, I must say, has acted nobly. To him you owe your deliverance."

"Not to him, but to you," said the woman, and a flush rose to her pale cheeks, in which there still remained traces of former beauty. For a moment the thought came to Burr that he must have met her before, but he at once dismissed it. How could this be possible? She was the wife of a Pennsylvania farmer, and he had never before been in that locality.

Whatever the woman may have thought, found no expression either in voice or manner. "You rode the mule here; perhaps I can ride him back," she ventured to say.

Burr shook his head. "I am afraid not," he said. "He is not a reliable animal and has only

been urged forward by a liberal application of sharp-pointed spurs ; but, after all," he continued, "it seems to be the only way. You are too weak to walk, and I must go forward at once."

"I will try to ride the mule," said the woman. She approached the animal, and putting her arm about his neck, began caressing him and speaking to him in a low, pleasant voice. The mule was as much astonished at this as he had been at the use of the spurs, and turned his large, expressive eyes towards her. Burr thought of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," as he looked upon the scene before him. Here was Titania, sure enough, but the animal was a real one, instead of being an ass's head upon a human body.

"He seems mild and tractable now," said the woman. "I think he will carry me home safely; at any rate, I must try it. How can I ever thank you?" she cried. "But you do not know my story. Shall I tell it to you?"

"It is not necessary," said Burr. "I have just come from the Westchester lines in York State, where such deeds of violence used to be of daily occurrence. Happily for all concerned, things have changed there for the better."

"Yes, I have heard," said the woman, "that after Colonel Aaron Burr was placed in command——"

"Yes," broke in Burr, "no doubt he rendered efficient service, but, after all, he could have done little without the help of his soldiers and that of the people."

He assisted the woman in mounting upon the

back of the apparently docile mule, and placed the reins in her hands. Then he mounted the horse which had belonged to the dead trooper. They wished each other a safe and speedy trip, and proceeded on their respective ways.

Before nightfall, Colonel Burr reached General Washington's camp and delivered to him the verbal message which had been entrusted to him by General McDougall.

The woman reached home safely and was welcomed not only by her child, but by her husband, who had returned during her absence. To him she told the story of her abduction and rescue; but neither Burr, seated in a tent at headquarters, talking about military operations in the coming campaign, nor the woman, by the fireside from which she had been so ruthlessly taken, telling over again the story of her rescue to her husband and clasping her child to her bosom—neither the man nor the woman, who had met so strangely and parted so suddenly, had a thought in their minds that they had ever met before.

When Major Burr, in 1776, accompanied Adelaide Clifton to New Jersey, he left her in the care of a maiden aunt, named Keturah Burr. Miss Burr was not wealthy, but she owned a farm, from which she derived a comfortable livelihood. She welcomed the young girl gladly, for the life she led was somewhat lonely, the only other occupant of the great farmhouse being her hired man. His name was Daniel Prentiss, and he was about twenty-five years of age.

Daniel was a generous, honest-hearted young

fellow. He had never seen so beautiful or so intelligent a woman before, and it is not strange that he fell in love with Adelaide and wished to make her his wife. He proposed and was quietly but firmly rejected. When Adelaide told Miss Burr what had occurred, to her surprise the old lady became very indignant and told the girl that in no way could she so well provide for her future as by becoming the wife of so good and true-hearted a young man as Daniel Prentiss. But Adelaide was obdurate and Daniel gave her up as lost to him forever.

But the hand of fate, or rather circumstance, sometimes accomplishes wonders. Miss Burr fell sick; Adelaide was unremitting in her attentions by day and night. The invalid received her ministrations without any demonstration of thankfulness. She might have relented before the end came, but several days before her death she fell into a comatose state and remained in that condition while life lasted.

When Miss Burr's will was read by the village lawyer, it was found that she had left all she possessed to Daniel Prentiss, making no provision whatever for the young girl who had been committed to her charge. Adelaide did not know where to go, but go she must. She was in her room on the evening of the day when the funeral had taken place, packing up a few articles she was to take with her—she knew not where—when there came a timid knock at her door.

She opened it and saw Daniel Prentiss. He asked her, in his quiet, undemonstrative way, if she

would come downstairs to the sitting-room for a few moments, as he wished to speak to her. Her first inclination was to refuse, for she thought he intended to repeat his proposal; but after a moment's hesitation she consented to come.

Daniel told her that he did not wish to say anything reflecting upon the action of the one who had been buried that day, but he thought, and he was going to say what he thought, that Miss Burr's will was very unjust in that it made no provision for her support.

"I have no right to her money," he went on. "I was only her hired man. I engaged to work for certain wages and my board. I got my pay and my living and that was all I was entitled to. I must speak plainly, Miss Clifton, so you will understand my position. I know Miss Burr was angry because you would not marry me. She told me so. To show her resentment at your action, she has given me everything and left you penniless. I will not accept a fortune—for this farm and her money would be a fortune to one in my position—to which I feel I have no right. I shall leave the village to-morrow to make my living elsewhere; but before I go I shall deed the farm and give up the property to you. You need it; I do not. I am young. I can work and make my way in the world without it."

"You must not go!" cried Adelaide. "You must stay, and I will go."

"No," said Daniel, "my mind is made up. I will not remain, and I shall insist upon giving everything to you."

"Will nothing induce you to remain?" asked Adelaide. Her cheek flushed and her lip quivered as she asked the question.

"Only one thing would induce me to stay," said Daniel. "If I stay, it must be because you wish it."

Then it was that Adelaide Clifton faced the second great problem of her life, and she solved it by asking Daniel Prentiss to stay and saying that she would stay with him.

Miss Burr had been outspoken during her lifetime in her comments upon Adelaide's refusal to accept Daniel Prentiss as her husband; the subject had formed a choice bit of gossip for the villagers, and a few months after their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Prentiss decided to sell the farm in Jersey and remove to Pennsylvania. Daniel purchased a fine farm, located a couple of miles from the thriving village known as Townsend's Furnace. A little daughter had been born to them, who had been named Maria, after Daniel's mother. He wished to go to war, but he could not leave his wife and infant child alone, for his hand was needed to supply the means of subsistence for the little family.

Several days before Colonel Burr's arrival at Townsend's Furnace, a drunken British soldier had entered the Prentiss house while Daniel was at work in a field not far away. The soldier had insulted Mrs. Prentiss. Her screams quickly brought her husband to the house, and he gave the ruffian a sound thrashing, who, smarting with rage at his deserved punishment, resolved to

inflict a still greater injury upon man and wife. With the aid of another British soldier, he abducted Mrs. Prentiss, and would have succeeded in his attempt to carry her off, had it not been for the opportune arrival of Colonel Burr, who in turn would have been powerless to effect the young woman's rescue from her captors, had it not been for the great assistance rendered, involuntarily, by the mule, Independence.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE YALE BOYS

THE news of Col. Aaron Burr's arrival at headquarters with a message of importance from General McDougall was soon noised throughout the American camp, and the adventurous young officer received the congratulations and commendations of superiors, equals, and inferiors in rank.

The night of his arrival he retired to rest early, for he was, in fact, nearly prostrated by the journey; not so much on account of the physical privations endured, as from the state of mental suspense in which he had been kept during the long trip, and the exciting adventures which had befallen him. He was both surprised and pleased to receive an early call the next morning from his old friend and companion in arms, Abiel Budlong.

"Wull, it does one's heart good ter see yer, Aaron," said Abe; "but heavens an' airth! how yer have shrunk. Yer warn't none too big afore, but there don't seem ter be as much of yer as there was when I fust knew yer. I tell yer, Aaron, yer don't eat enough. I told yer so when we lived in Litchfield, and I tell yer so now, agin."

"It is not the eating," Burr replied, pleasantly; "if I should eat any more than I do, my condition would be even worse. Since the battle of Mon-

mouth, when I remained under the hot sun all day long, and then, thoroughly exhausted, slept all night upon my back on the moist ground, my general health has been very poor, although my nerve force was not weakened by the exposure; but that, too, has at last given way, and I realize the fact that I must go home, take medical advice and a long rest, or — well, it is a little too early to talk of that now. I suppose you know that I have resigned my position in the army.”

“Yes, I heerd on’t,” said Abe, “and I was mighty sorry, too, when the news came; but, seein’ as how yer feel, I can’t blame yer. Wull, I’ve got some news fer yer. My time is up to-day, and to-morrow I git an honorable discharge. I’m goin’ back to Connecticut ter see how things are gittin’ on in old Litchfield. Yer ain’t fit ter travel alone and I think my sarvices will come in handy.”

“They always have done so,” said Burr, “and I know of no one whose company on the return journey I should more thoroughly enjoy.”

“That’s very complimentary of yer, Aaron,” said Abe, “but you always had the knack of sayin’ the right thing at the right time. It comes nat’ral ter yer. When are yer goin’ back?”

“To-morrow or next day,” was the reply. “I came only to oblige General McDougall, for it was imperative that the Commander-in-Chief should know what was going on in New York.”

“Wull, I guess,” said Abe, “the United States of America has been obliged, too, and ought ter give yer special thanks fer doin’ what so many have tried ter do and couldn’t.”

“No matter about the thanks, Abe,” Burr said; “few of us in this world get our just deserts, either for good or bad actions; but if we know in our hearts that we have done our best, the satisfaction that comes from that knowledge is worth more than official votes of thanks.”

The day but one, following, Colonel Burr — to still retain by courtesy the title which he had so long and ably borne officially — accompanied by Abiel Budlong, started on the homeward journey. More than once his strength gave out, and stops of several day’s duration were made, in order that he might recuperate to some extent. He had intended to go to Litchfield with Abe, but when they reached New Haven, he declared that he could proceed no farther. Besides, he could secure better medical advice and attention at New Haven than in a small country town.

For a fortnight after their arrival, Abe insisted upon remaining with his old friend, devoting every moment, when not asleep, to his care. By this time, Burr had regained his customary mental activity, but was still in a weak physical condition.

“Rest, and time in which to take it,” said he one day to Abe, “are all that I require now. I am on the mending hand, and although I am pleased to have you with me, you can do me no real good by remaining.”

So the farewell words were spoken, and Abe started for Litchfield, leaving Burr in the care of the aged landlady with whom he boarded. But he was not to be allowed an opportunity for uninterrupted rest. Early one morning, while still in bed,

he heard loud voices down stairs, but, although he listened intently, he could not hear what was being said. He was soon to be enlightened, for there came a loud knock at the door, and almost immediately, Mark Updyke, the landlady's only son, burst into the room, his face betraying great excitement.

"What is the matter?" cried Burr, rising to a sitting posture on the bed.

"Wull, I guess our time's come!" cried Mark. "Yer see, I went out to Farmer Stebbin's this morning to see if I could buy some hay, and when I was there a feller cum ridin' up to the farm. I don't know what his name is, and he said as how Tryon, with a lot of sojers, was comin' ter New Haven to take what he wanted and burn the rest of it up. So I guess we shall git more than we bargained for afore we git through."

Burr sprang from the bed. "Shut the door, Mark," he said, "and help me to dress. Not those," he cried, as Mark essayed to pass him the clothing which he had worn daily. "In the closet there, you will find my uniform. As you know, Mark, I am no longer a colonel in the army, but when danger threatens the city, as you say it does, I am a soldier until that danger is past. Can you get me a horse, Mark?" he asked, as he buckled on his sword.

"Yer can have mine," said Mark. "It's down to the door, all saddled and bridled, and there ain't a stronger bit of hoss flesh in the county, if I do say it."

Five minutes later, Colonel Burr reached the

headquarters of the little body of militia to which the defence of the city was entrusted. Nearly all the members of the company were there, but Captain Peters was in a state of great trepidation.

"Are your men all ready?" cried Burr, turning to the captain.

"Wull, most of em' are here," said Peters, "but I guess it won't do no good. We hain't got no breastworks, nor no fort, nor no trenches, and 'twon't be much use to try to keep Tryon back. We might as well let him have his own way. Perhaps, after all, he'll only rob us, and won't burn the city, for that wouldn't do him any good."

"As you do not live here in New Haven, Captain Peters," said Burr, "you are not likely to lose any of your worldly possessions; but those men and women who do live here have a great deal at stake, and something should be done to protect their property, and perhaps their lives. I don't think, however, it will be of any use for you to lead your men against the enemy, Captain Peters, if you are in that frame of mind. I do not share your gloomy forebodings, for I think we can drive the enemy away. I am willing to lead if your men will follow. Now, boys!" he cried, "how many of you will come with me?"

Out of about fifty men present, less than a dozen signified their willingness to follow Burr. To them he gave directions to at once return to the city and collect every available article that could be used in forming a strong barricade.

"Do not put what you collect in position," he said, "until I come. I have an idea as to which

is the best way to construct the breastworks. I am going to drum up some more recruits and will join you in a short time."

Without deigning another word to Captain Peters or the men of his command who had declined to accompany him, Burr turned his horse and galloped off. Where was he going? He knew, but the others did not. He knew where the young blood of the city was congregated, where the fire and patriotism burned brightest, and where he was most likely to find strong hearts, and willing hands to grasp muskets and follow him to the field of battle. On he sped, driving his spurs into the sides of the sturdy steed which bore him, until the *campus* of Yale College was in sight. The students were just assembled for the duties of the day, and Burr realized that he had arrived at a most opportune time. It took but a few moments to convey the intelligence of the coming danger, which had been previously unknown, to the president and faculty. The college bells were at once rung vigorously, and in a short time all the students were gathered in groups upon the *campus*.

"Young men," cried Burr, "your beautiful city is threatened with dire disaster. That merciless robber, Tryon, is on his way here to loot the town and then burn it. We must fight for our property, or our lives will be of little value after we have lost our honor. We cannot depend upon the militia, for their captain and the majority of the men think that resistance is useless. If you, too, think so, our fate is sealed. If you think otherwise, there is yet hope. If you are willing to

follow me, I will lead you and do my best to save the city."

Round after round of ringing cheers came from the throats of the young students. A loud voice cried:

"Lead on, Colonel Burr, and we will follow!"

The cry was taken up and repeated by hundreds of voices.

"It is well!" cried Burr. "I was sure that Young America would not refuse to do its duty. I will give you fifteen minutes in which to arm yourselves. We must proceed at once to the field of action, or it may be too late."

The half score of militiamen had worked vigorously and had enlisted the services of hundreds of citizens, who rendered willing assistance; when Burr arrived, riding at the head of his army of Yale Boys, enough hogsheads, barrels, and timber had been collected to have built a fort of respectable dimensions. Under Burr's able and energetic directions, a line of breastworks was drawn up across the road by which Tryon would undoubtedly endeavor to enter the city. These breastworks had been so constructed, that, although the brave young students were sheltered from the sight of the enemy, loopholes had been left, through which they could see and fire upon the advancing foe.

Then came the most trying and terrible part of a battle—the moments, and often hours of suspense which usually precede actual hostilities; but instead of unnerving the young students, this only fired their determination to make as vigorous a resistance as possible.

About nine o'clock, sounds reached their expectant ears which heralded the approach of the invaders. They soon came in sight, and the advance guard was evidently astonished at the appearance of the formidable fort, for such it seemed to them, which had been erected. An order to halt was apparently given, for the Britishers stopped, evidently with a purpose in view of making a reconnaissance. This might have been an easy matter in an open field, but it was more difficult of accomplishment when it was impossible to see from one street what was going on in another. Besides, Colonel Burr had sent the trusty militiamen, who had been joined by some stout-hearted citizens, to patrol all the streets in the immediate vicinity, with instructions to fire on scouting parties as soon as they were seen.

General Tryon, who was brave only when his force far outnumbered his opponents and when there was a prospect of securing valuable plunder, hesitated in making an attack upon breastworks of unknown strength, behind which lurked a force of defenders of unknown numbers. He quickly exemplified the truth of the old adage, that discretion is the better part of valor, by ordering a retreat, and the delighted citizens of New Haven went to their beds that night well knowing that it was to Colonel Burr that the rescue of the city from destruction was due, and on that night numberless prayers went up to Heaven from honest hearts, imploring the Giver of All Good to send health and strength to the brave young officer who had saved their homes.

As for the brave young officer, he returned to his lodgings and threw himself upon his bed, utterly prostrated. Mrs. Updyke, however, was a capable nurse and skilled in the use of those remedies which prolonged the lives of our forefathers before modern compounds made from minerals and coal-tar products took their place. Her constant care and the untiring attention of her son Mark, who acted as an intermediary by which the citizens of New Haven expressed their gratitude to their preserver, soon brought Burr back to a state of apparent health. From this time on, his progress towards complete recovery was rapid.

The war was surely drawing to a close. It was plain to him, that, even with recovered health, there was no opportunity for him in future military operations. During the continuance of a war, many branches of business are sure to languish; when the conflict ends, they revive, and with proper encouragement soon flourish again. Burr's thoughts went back to the day when he had left Litchfield to join the army at Cambridge — the time when he was studying law, with the intention of becoming a member of the bar. He would resume his studies, he thought; when the time came to practice, what then? There came to him the same thoughts that usually fill the minds of young men standing on the threshold of active life; he would marry, have a home such as he had often pictured to himself, and, perhaps, children to bear his name. It was the way of life and why should he not follow it, as countless thousands had done before?

CHAPTER XXV

WITH WIFE AND CHILDREN

ALTHOUGH he had given all the spare time at his disposal to his legal studies, Burr knew that he was not sufficiently prepared to stand the examination which would be required before he could be admitted to the bar.

A great opportunity had been created for the Whig lawyers, by the passage of acts in the various States, disfranchising the Tory lawyers and preventing them from practicing in the courts. Now was the time for the patriot lawyers to step into the places thus made vacant, for there were numberless disputes to be settled, relating principally to land and house tenure.

Burr knew that he could not successfully complete his studies at New Haven, but he had no desire to return to Litchfield and place himself again under the tuition of his brother-in-law, so he wrote to William Patterson, one of the most prominent lawyers in the States, asking permission to enter his office as a student and assistant. He was gladly welcomed by Judge Patterson, and a course of study was blocked out for the young aspirant for legal honors.

Burr soon found that if he followed the curriculum suggested by his patron, it would be many years before he could present himself for examina-

tion. The Judge, as a lawyer, belonged to the old school, that believed in going back to first principles — to the early Greek and Roman law — omitting nothing that any country could furnish in the way of information.

It is not strange that, several months after beginning study with Judge Patterson, we find Burr transferred to the office of Judge Thomas Smith. The change offered two material advantages; one was, that Judge Smith was willing to teach him the practice of law, without taking time to go into its origin and historical evolution; the second advantage, and a very important one, came from the fact, that Burr, by the change, was brought into close proximity to Paramus, where dwelt the woman who had been the Hero to his Leander. By this nearness to Mrs. Prevost, who was the object of his most exalted affection, both love and ambition were satisfied.

When satisfied in his own mind that he was fully prepared to undergo any examination to which he might be subjected, he decided to remove to the State of New York and take up his residence in Albany. No sooner was he domiciled than he presented his application for admission to the New York bar. This was promptly rejected on the ground that he had not studied for three consecutive years, as required by law. To the average young man such a reply would have been a rebuff apparently impossible to overcome, but Burr was fertile in ideas and adept in argument. He prepared an appeal which he presented to the judges; in it he took the ground that his

failure to carry on his studies consecutively had been caused by the fact that he was serving in the army of his country. He argued that the length of time devoted to study was not the true criterion for regulating admission to the bar, and claimed that if a student could successfully pass the prescribed examination, the evident intent of the law was secured.

His appeal received respectful consideration, and, somewhat to his own astonishment, was favorably acted upon, and he was notified to present himself for examination. Naturally, the examiners felt justified in making that examination much more severe and rigorous than usual, for the reason that the circumstances were peculiar in their nature. As the inquiries related principally to the practice of law and not to its history, Burr was fully prepared for the trying ordeal, triumphantly passed it, and was at once licensed as an attorney.

The first case that was placed in his hands ended in a verdict in favor of his client; so did the second, third, fourth, and fifth, and it was soon noised about, that if a man wished to be on the winning side, he should engage Colonel Burr as his attorney. Success in any line of professional work brings with it financial remuneration.

Reverend Aaron Burr had left his only son, Aaron, quite a large patrimony; but during the war it had disappeared, for its possessor could never refuse a plea for charity or for financial aid from his brother officers and soldiers. He had spent but little, comparatively, upon himself, but

the equipping of Colonel Malcolm's regiment, which was in reality his own command, had made a deep inroad upon his fortune, while his sickness had made such heavy drains upon it, that when he left New Haven he had but little beyond his clear brain and willing hands to fall back upon.

Now came the most eventful journey of his life — the most eventful one to most men. He had prepared a home in Albany for the life-mate who was to enjoy it with him. When he arrived at Paramus he lost no time in informing the Rev. Dr. Bogart that the village church would be needed at an early day for a very important ceremony, and that his services would be required. That time came and went, and a few days later, Col. Aaron Burr and his wife, Mrs. Theodosia Burr, started upon their long journey to Albany. Not then, as now, did a train of Pullman cars, provided with every device for comfort and safety, roll out from a commodious station; nor did a river palace leave a New York City pier and steam up the Hudson. The journey then was made partly by water and partly by land. The open boat, the ferry-boat, sometimes a canoe, even, was utilized for river transportation. On land, the saddle-horse, the stage-coach, and the open wagon divested the journey of any monotony in its progress.

The marriage of Col. Aaron Burr, at the age of twenty-six, to the widow, Theodosia Prevost, who was ten years his senior, attracted much attention and comment. The astonishment of his friends and of society in general was

greatly increased when it was learned that Mrs. Prevost was the mother of two little boys, Frederic and Bartow. Gossips and the curious were not long in ascertaining the real facts. They learned that Miss Theodosia Bartow was American born; that her first husband, Jean Marc Prevost, a brother of Gen. Augustine Prevost, was born in Switzerland, had entered the British army, and died on the Island of Jamaica in the year 1779, three years before her marriage to Colonel Burr. There could be no fault found with the record, but still it did not explain the why and wherefore of the apparently ill-assorted marriage.

It was no doubt true, as his friends thought, that Colonel Burr could have married some young and beautiful woman, connected with one of the most influential families, whose position and money would have been of great service to him in the battle of life. But Burr had read the works of Mary Wollstonecraft, and had formed his own idea of true womanhood. He had been a student, also, of the writings of Lord Chesterfield, and perhaps one of his letters to his godson, Philip Stanhope, had strongly influenced him in making his selection. When a young man becomes a votary or disciple of some new teacher of philosophy or religion, he is apt to believe all the doctrines of his teacher, rather than to accept some and reject others. Burr's choice of a wife may have been largely influenced by his belief in the truth of Number 134 of Lord Chesterfield's celebrated letters, which reads as follows:

“Bad company is much more easily defined

than good, for what is bad must strike everybody at first sight; folly, knavery, and profligacy can never be mistaken for wit, honour, and decency. In good company there are several gradations from good to the best. Merely good is rather free from objection than deserving of praise. Aim at the best. But what is the best? I take it to be those societies of men, or women, or a mixture of both, where great politeness, good breeding, and decency, though, perhaps, not always virtue, prevail.

“Women of fashion and character (I do not mean absolutely unblemished) are a necessary ingredient in the composition of good company. The attentions which they require, and which are always paid them by well-bred men, keep up politeness and give a habit of good breeding; whereas, men, when they live together and without the lenity of women, in company are apt to grow careless, negligent, and rough among one another.

“In company every woman is every man’s superior and must be addressed with respect, nay more, with flattery, and you need not fear making it too strong. Such flattery is not mean on your part, nor pernicious to them, for it can never give them a greater opinion of their beauty or their sense than they had before. Therefore, make the dose strong; it will be greedily swallowed.

“Women stamp the fashionable or unfashionable character of all young men at their first appearance in the world; bribe them, then, with minute attentions, good breeding, and flattery, to make them give their vote and interest in your

favor. I have often known their proclamation give a value and currency to base coin enough, and consequently will add a lustre to the truest sterling. Women, though otherwise called sensible, have all of them more or less weaknesses, singularities, whims, and humours, especially vanity; study attentively all these failings, gratify them as far as you can, nay, flatter them, and sacrifice your own little humours to them.

“Young men are too apt to show dislike, not to say an aversion and contempt, for ugly and old women, which is both unpolite and injudicious, for there is a respectful civility due to the whole sex; besides, the ugly and the old talk the most, having the least to do themselves; are jealous of being despised and never forgive it; and I could suppose cases in which you would desire their friendship, or, at least, their neutrality. Let it be a rule with you never to show that contempt which very often you will have, and with reason, for any human creature, for it will never be forgiven; an injury is sooner pardoned than an insult.”

Theodosia Prevost was not a beautiful woman; in fact, she possessed few, if any, of those physical attributes which, as a rule, are so attractive to young men. Burr, of course, had not been insensible to the physical charms of those young women into whose society he had been thrown in his college days and during his military life. He was young, handsome, and brave, and no doubt had inspired the *grande passion* in the hearts of many of his female acquaintances.

The situation in which young men are thus

placed is as if one were led into a garden full of beautiful flowers and told to make choice of a single blossom. On every hand he sees luxuriant roses, and, unthinking, he would naturally choose from these and look no farther; but one more discriminating would examine every flower-bed, and perhaps pass by the seductive rose and choose, instead, a sweetly perfumed pink, a modest violet, or a fragile lily.

Theodosia Prevost's beauties were those of the mind rather than of the body. She was intelligent and sympathetic; she could read and write French and other foreign languages, and was conversant with the best literature of the day. She was a widow with two fatherless children, and needed a friend and a counsellor as much as a lover and a husband.

Burr was young and ambitious; he was poor, but determined to win riches; he desired to become a leader in the profession which he had chosen, and to do this, constant study and close application to his professional duties would be absolutely necessary. He realized that if he married a votary of fashion, he would be drawn into the whirl of society, the demands of which are inexorable. If he married in this wise, his ambition would have to divide time with vanity and frivolity. He wished for a helpmate and a haven of rest in the evening, where he could recuperate after the strong mental application of the day. He felt that he had chosen wisely, and who, looking at all the circumstances of the case, can say, advisedly, that he had not? No one should wonder,

then, at his remark to his newly wedded wife when they left the little church at Paramus. Turning to her, he said, no doubt with a vivid recollection in his mind of the military victory which he had secured there years before :

“ I have always been fortunate at Paramus.”

The newly made couple reached Albany and settled down in their home life. The first full day of it was ushered in with sounds of infantile prattle and childish glee. The old rooms resounded with the happy cries of the two little boys, triply fortunate in thus finding mother, home, and father, for Burr's heart was large and he did not wait to learn to love his wife's children, but loved them at once and treated them from the first day of his marriage as though they were his own.

Within a year the happiness of that little home reached its climax in the birth of little Theodosia, who was destined to become so prominent a figure in the life and times of her native land.

To the ambitious man, the field of action always appears circumscribed, and he is ever looking for a wider opportunity for development. The city of New York was the Mecca of all the great lawyers in the State, and Burr soon turned his eager eyes in that direction. He wrote to a friend to secure a house for him, and when little Theodosia was about a year old, the family took up its residence in a house in Maiden Lane, at a rental of two hundred pounds per annum. The friend thoughtfully provided that the rent should not begin until the British evacuated the city.

Burr's ambitious dreams now seemed likely to

be fulfilled to the uttermost. The widest field for legal development in the country was open to him; he had a wife and three beautiful children, upon whom he bestowed a wealth of affection; but the greatest happiness is seldom, if ever secured without the admixture of some alloy. In Burr's case, this consisted in his frequent and enforced absences from home.

Albany was the capital of the State, and many cases which had their inception in New York City were finally decided at Albany. The journey from one city to the other was a long and tedious one, and it had to be made very often. The little household looked forward with feelings of apprehension to each rumor of a visit to Albany. During his absence there was a natural presence of fear that something might happen to him on his travels, and his return home was awaited with great anxiety by all. The progress of the mails was, necessarily, as slow as that of the traveller, and but little comfort could be secured from letters so long in transit, for no idea could be formed of the present condition of the writer.

Upon one occasion, while Burr was absent from home, engaged in legal business at Albany, little Theodosia fell sick. Then it was, that in the agony of the situation, Mrs. Burr wrote a letter to her husband which shows unmistakably her motherly devotion and the great love which she felt for the father of her little girl. No true mother can read it without sympathizing with every thought that it contains.

“How unfortunate, my dearest Aaron, is our present separation. I never shall have resolution to consent to another.

We must not be guided by others. We are certainly formed of different materials; and our undertakings must coincide with them.

“A few hours after I wrote you by Colonel Lewis, our sweet infant was taken ill, very ill. My mind and spirits have been on the rack from that moment to this. When she sleeps, I watch anxiously; when she wakes, anxious fears accompany every motion. I talked of my love towards her, but I knew it not till put to this unhappy test. I know not whether to give her medicine or withhold it; doubt and terror are the only sensations of which I am sensible. She has slept better last night, and appears more lively this morning, than since her illness. This has induced me to postpone an express to you, which I have had in readiness since yesterday. If this meets you, I need not dwell upon my wish.

“I will only put an injunction on your riding so fast, or in the heat, or dew. Remember your presence is to support, to console your Theo, perhaps to rejoice with her at the restoration of our much-loved child. Let us encourage this hope; encourage it, at least, till you see me, which I flatter myself will be before this can reach you. Some kind spirit will whisper to my Aaron how much his tender attention is wanted to support his Theo; how much his love is necessary, to give her that fortitude, that resolution, which nature has denied her but through his medium. Adieu.

“THEODOSIA.”

Fortunately, little Theodosia recovered; at which a feeling of intense happiness pervaded the entire household. The little girl was fortunate in having two brothers to guard her infant footsteps, and the love which Frederic Prevost formed for her bore fruit in after years in the guise of a most exquisite brotherly affection. If he had been a child of her own father, Frederic Prevost could not have proved a truer or more devoted brother.

As the professional opportunities at Albany had appeared circumscribed to the ambitious desires of Burr, when compared with the greater

ones to be found in the city of New York, so the little house in Maiden Lane came to look circumscribed and unpretentious when compared with the mansions occupied by some of his brother lawyers, who were not more successful in their practice nor favored with greater financial returns for their labors than himself.

The journeys to and from Albany being made largely on horseback, Burr had ample opportunity for viewing the estates, which, even at that early day, were found upon both banks of the Hudson. At a village called Johnson's, Burr was greatly impressed with the desirability of the location and the natural beauty of its surroundings. Upon his return home, he began to extol the attractions of this romantic spot, and it needed no hint from him to apprise his wife that his mind was being gradually fixed upon it as a desirable location for their future home.

Perhaps Mrs. Burr had seen enough of country life and preferred that of the city; but whatever may have been her reason, she quickly expressed her disapprobation of the proposed removal. The subject had been the topic of conversation upon several occasions; but one evening, after the children were in bed, Burr mentioned it again, and Mrs. Burr divined from his manner that he was determined to have the matter definitely settled before the conversation ended.

"I cannot help referring again," he began, "to that piece of land at Johnson's, that I have spoken about several times. Oh, Theo! there is the most delightful grove — so darkened with

weeping willows, that at noonday a susceptible fancy like yours would mistake it for a bewitching moonlight evening. These sympathizing willows, too, exclude even the prying eyes of curiosity. There, no rude noise interrupts the softest whisper. There, no harsher sound is heard than the mild cooings of the gentle dove, the gay thrasher's animated warbles, and the soft murmurs of the passing brook. Really, Theo, it is charming!"

Mrs. Burr's reply to this adulatory description was simple, but concise: "You know, Aaron, I never did like weeping willows. Mother had a picture of a graveyard full of them, and I never looked upon it when I was a young girl without thinking of death and gravestones."

Burr went on, apparently not noticing his wife's comment: "From this amiable bower you ascend a gentle declivity, by a winding path, to a cluster of lofty oaks and locusts. Here nature assumes a more august appearance. The gentle brook which murmured soft below, here becomes a cataract. Here you behold the stately Mohawk rolling majestically in sight of the lofty Appalachians. Here the mind assumes a nobler tone, and is occupied by sublimer thoughts. What there, was tenderness, here swells to rapture. It is truly charming!"

"I am sorry the river is so near," said Mrs. Burr, quietly. "When the children were out of sight, I should always be fearful that they would fall into it and be drowned."

Again Burr proceeded with his description, apparently unmindful of his wife's remark:

“The windings of this enchanting brook form a lovely island, variegated by the sportive hand of nature. This shall be yours. We will plant it with jessamines and woodbine, and call it Cyprus. It seems formed for the residence of the Loves and Graces, and is, therefore, yours by the best of titles. It is, indeed, most charming!”

The maternal instinct was again predominant in Mrs. Burr. “I shall have but little time,” said she, “to impersonate one of the Graces in a sylvan arbor, with the care of a large house upon my hands, not forgetting the duty which I owe to our three little children.”

Again Burr proceeded with his somewhat grandiloquent description without answering his wife’s objections:

“In many things I am indeed unhappy in possessing a singularity of taste; particularly unhappy when that taste differs in anything from yours. But we cannot control necessity, though we often persuade ourselves that certain things are our choice, when, in truth, we have been unavoidably impelled to them. In the instance I am going to relate, I shall not examine whether I have been governed by mere fancy, or by motives of expediency, or by caprice; you will probably say the latter.”

Mrs. Burr clasped her hands nervously, dropped her eyelids, and bit her lip. He had decided, then; it was evident that he intended to leave Maiden Lane and move to Fort Johnson.

Burr saw her mental condition, but went on: “My dear Theo, arm yourself with all your forti-

tude. I know you have much of it, and I hope that upon this occasion you will not fail to exercise it. I abhor preface and preamble, and don't know why I have now used it so freely. But I am well aware that what I have related needs much apology from me, and will need much to you. If I am the unwilling, the unfortunate instrument of depriving you of any part of your promised gayety or pleasure, I hope you are too generous to aggravate the misfortune by upbraiding me with it. Be assured — I hope the assurance is needless — that whatever diminishes your happiness equally impairs mine. In short, then — for I grow tedious both to you and myself; and to procrastinate the relation of disagreeable events only gives them poignancy — in short, then, my dear Theo, the beauty of this same Fort Johnson, the fertility of the soil, the commodiousness and elegance of the buildings, the great value of the mills, and the very inconsiderable price which was asked for the whole, have *not* induced me to purchase it, and probably never will."

The next instant he was on his knees at his wife's feet and had taken both of her hands in his. Looking up into her anxious, troubled face, with a smile upon his own, he said:

"I am confident of meeting your forgiveness, Theo."

CHAPTER XXVI

RICHMOND HILL

IN the olden days the slight eminence which afterwards became known as Richmond Hill was, in reality, a hill, and a sand-hill at that. This sand ridge stretched nearly across the Island of Manhattan from west to east, ending near the Minetta Water, which, despite its pretty name, was, in fact, but a swamp pond, the adjoining land being commonly known as the Lisenard Meadows.

According to the old chroniclers, the location, in its natural state, was one of great beauty. Looking in either direction from the summit of the hill, an enticing prospect met the eye—to the west, the onward moving waters of the Hudson; to the south and north, woods, and glens, and dells; while to the east could be seen the shallow pond with the pretty name—Minetta Water.

A few years after General Wolfe broke the power of the French in the new world by defeating Montcalm and making Quebec an English stronghold, Abraham Mortier, Esq., Commissary to His Majesty's forces, purchased the estate and built thereon a dwelling, which, according to the taste of the period, was "vastly fine." In the words of a more recent writer, "Mr. Commissary Mortier's house was a wooden building of massive

architecture, with a lofty portico supported by Ionic columns, the front walls decorated with pilasters of the same order, and its whole appearance distinguished by a Palladian character of rich, though sober ornament. In other words, it was one of those Grecian temples built of two-inch pine planks, the like of which may still be seen on the Long Island shore of the Narrows — to the astonishment and confusion of the intelligent foreigner for the first time coming up the bay.”

When General Washington, at the head of the American army, arrived in New York in 1776, he chose the mansion known as Richmond Hill as his headquarters, and here they were located when Aaron Burr became a member of his official family. As the young subaltern looked about the spacious grounds, it was but natural that his eyes should rest upon the imposing mansion, and, perhaps, just as natural that he should say to himself, “some day I will become the owner of that house.”

Oftentimes, the day dreams of young men and of young women are not realized, but sometimes they do become true. It seems to have been marked out by the hand of destiny that Aaron Burr, on the occasion of his first arrival in New York, should become an inmate of Richmond Hill, and that the day which marked the climax of his political and social supremacy was to be passed in that same house.

It matters little who occupied Richmond Hill from the time Washington was driven from the city by the victorious British, until John Adams, Vice-President of the United States, took

up his residence there. Then it became the home of generous hospitality and important social functions.

Aaron Burr's palatial home has been described, but it is not yet time for him to enter it. He still lives in Maiden Lane, but time has added eight years to his age, and the infant Theodosia is a precocious young miss of seven summers.

The legal path which Burr had chosen to follow broadened into a wide and easily travelled road. As a recognition of his marked ability in that line he had been made Attorney-General and a seat upon the bench had been offered him. Why did he not accept it? The law had been a generous mistress. Why was it that he forsook her and became a devotee of the god of politics?

A student of war and an ambitious aspirant for the honors which fall to those who are victorious, perhaps it is but natural that he should think the court-room too circumscribed an arena for the display of his fighting qualities. The halls of legislation offered a wider field, and to them he betook himself. In politics, as in war, he was victorious. In his first political tournament he unhorsed his adversary, Gen. Philip Schuyler, and wrested from him the title to a seat in the Senate of the United States. From that day, Alexander Hamilton, who was the son-in-law of General Schuyler, became the implacable foe of Aaron Burr. Up to that time, if not implacable, he had at least been inventive, secretive, and persistent in his opposition.

Thus far, all had gone well with Aaron Burr.

Successful as lawyer and politician, he had a loving wife, a happy home, and a beautiful and intelligent daughter. Probably no young man in America at that time had before him more alluring prospects.

In the old Grecian Mythology, a goddess is mentioned whose duty it was to watch those who were successful, and when they had nearly reached the summit of their ambition, to use her various arts and devices to bring about their downfall. Certain it is, that at this time a most terrible misfortune was experienced by Aaron Burr. His wife, who had never been very strong physically, began to show signs of an insidious disease, which the physicians soon pronounced to be incurable. Burr, who had filled out but half of his senatorial term, wished to resign his office, return to New York, and remain by her bedside. But his wife would not listen to such a proposition, and the earnest entreaties of both husband and daughter failed to secure her consent.

She died when her daughter Theodosia was but eleven years of age, and Burr was left to face the future without her loving heart, her wise council, and her helping hand. Besides this, the sole charge of his young daughter devolved upon him, and it was with a feeling of great relief and satisfaction that he reached the end of his senatorial term, and could once more return to his home, left barren by the loss of his beloved wife.

But a new hope now sprang up in his heart and he was urged on by a new incentive and a noble one. The mother was dead, but the daughter lived.

He had peculiar, in fact, original ideas as to how a young woman should be educated, and they had been carried out with his wife's knowledge and consent. Now, he had become sole arbiter of his daughter's physical, mental, moral, and religious development, and he set himself to the task with a vigilance and a consecrated purpose such as had never before animated a father.

He did not wish that she should be beautiful in person only. He wished her to be beautiful in thought, in action, in learning, and in the expression of what she knew. But of what use would it be to raise a beautiful flower in a secluded garden, where no one could see the great result of his peculiar system of cultivation? No, she should be transplanted to a home worthy of her beauty and attainments; and thus it was, that in 1797, when Theodosia Burr was but fourteen years of age, she became the virtual mistress of Richmond Hill, which had been purchased by her father.

The mansion was elegantly furnished, for Burr had plenty of money at his command. A great library was filled with the most valuable books. He entertained sumptuously. Not only the leading Americans of the time, but many visitors from foreign lands became the recipients of his unbounded hospitality.

His wife's children, the Prevost boys, were his children as well, and participated without stint in the bounty of the great mansion. That his daughter, Theodosia, who had been deprived of a mother's love and care, might not suffer from the

lack of female society, another young woman became a member of the household. This was Natalie de L'Age. She was a companion for Theodosia, her intimate friend and confidant. Being of French extraction and adept in the use of the French language, Theodosia had an opportunity to obtain an intimate and correct knowledge of what was considered the polite speech of the day.

Time wore on, as is its wont, and Theodosia's seventeenth birthday was near at hand. Natalie was two years older, and presuming upon that fact, prevailed upon Colonel Burr to give her complete charge of the preparations for the festivities which were to honor the event.

One morning the two young ladies were discussing the arrangements for the coming anniversary. "I think," said Theodosia, "that, being the mistress of the house, and it being my birthday which is to be made the occasion of a celebration, I ought to have something to say about the manner in which the guests are to be entertained. Why, Natalie, my father and you have actually combined to force me to abdicate my position as mistress of Richmond Hill, and I have not so much to do with its conduct as old Peggy in the kitchen."

"Only tempora —" began Natalie; then finding the long English word too perplexing, she relapsed into a mixture of English and French. "Only *pour un moment, ma petite*," she cried. "After the *fête* is over, I will abdicate and you can be *la reine* once more. *Mais le ministre d'affaires*

domestiques has put me in charge of this *grande maison*."

Theodosia glanced at Natalie, and her face indicated her intention to administer some words of reproof. Natalie saw the change in her companion's expression and ejaculated:

"Why, what's the matter, Theo? What unpardonable sin have I committed?"

"It is not a sin, but a misdemeanor," was the grave reply. "You are my instructor in the French language. What would you say, if, while pretending to talk French, I interlarded my conversation with English phrases and idioms?"

Natalie bit her lip, pouted, then looked out of an adjacent window. Suddenly she sprang from her chair, threw her arms about Theodosia's neck, kissed her, and exclaimed:

"You are right, Theo! You always are. I will never do so again. What a magnificent time we shall have. No daughter of a king ever had more suitors at her feet than you will have that evening."

"Nonsense!" said Theodosia. "You know, Natalie, that I do not care for lovers. My duty is to fill the place made vacant by my mother's death and do all I that can to contribute to the happiness of my father."

"I know that," rejoined Natalie; "he is worthy of all the love and devotion that you can show him. I love him, too. I have no father or mother—perhaps that is why. You are not jealous, Theo?"

"I love those who love my father," was the reply.

"I will go farther than that," cried Natalie, impetuously. "I hate those who do not like him, and who are not good and kind to him. I wish I could choose the guests in addition to the selection of the flowers and decorations."

"I am curious to know whom you would invite," Theodosia remarked.

"I cannot name them all at once," said Natalie. "Of course, one of them would be that handsome young Mr. Alston from South Carolina. No, you needn't blush, Theo, it is not at all necessary. Then I should not forget that very nice young man who writes such pretty things, that I love to read so much — Washington — Washington Irving. What a grand name that is, and how grandly Mrs. Washington Irving would sound."

"You have selected two of the guests," said Theodosia, "it is my turn to choose the next two. You may add to your list, Natalie, Count Jérôme de Joliette, and, as you told me, it is not necessary for you to blush at the simple mention of his name; but if you do, I know that your cheeks will become redder than ever when I tell you that my second choice is Maj. Thomas Sumter."

It must not be inferred that Miss Theodosia Burr, who, at the age of fourteen, was proficient in mathematics, an advanced student in philosophy, had a good knowledge of Latin, could read Virgil and Horace in the original, speak, write, and read French with fluency, who was skilled in the housewifely arts of the period, and who had mastered all the intricacies of polite social decorum, would have of her own accord engaged

in what may appear to some to be a trivial conversation; but a king is often obliged to talk with a commoner on his own level, as is the lord of the manor with the peasant who tills the soil of his estate and pays the rent which contributes towards supporting his master in affluence. So it was, that Natalie, whose perceptive powers only reached the superficial and whose thoughts were but little deeper than her perception, often forced Theodosia to indulge in conversations, the time for which could have been better employed by one having such a practical and educated mind.

As personal beauty, however, is seen to the greatest advantage when in close contact with a homely foil, which enhances its charms, so the *abandon* of Natalie's manner and the unrestraint which marked her conversation only served to show more plainly to the looker-on the charm of Theodosia's always ladylike demeanor and the extent and completeness of her education. All who were brought in contact with her, uniformly acknowledged that she was by far the best informed woman of her time in **America**.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THEODOSIA'S LOVERS

THE birthday *fête* was over. The anniversary of Theodosia's natal day had been celebrated in a manner commensurate with her father's reputed wealth, his commanding position at the bar, and his acknowledged high social standing.

To Theodosia and Natalie, the evening had been one of unmixed pleasure. They had been the recipients of innumerable compliments, courtesies, and civilities, and to cap all, opportunities had been secured by two young men to whisper words of love in Theodosia's ear, while Natalie had been equally favored.

Joseph Alston, a young and handsome South Carolinian, and the owner of an extensive rice plantation cultivated by hundreds of slaves, who were also his property, had declared his love for Theodosia and had asked her to become his wife. One such conquest would have entirely satisfied any ambition she might have had in that direction, but Cupid was not content with this single instance of adoration. Theodosia was destined to listen, before the evening was over, to words so suggestive of admiration and of even stronger feeling, that she had no doubt that Washington Irving, the young author, would have sued for her hand if he had thought there was the slightest chance of success.

Attached to the French Embassy at Washington was the young Count Jérôme de Joliette. Handsome in face and figure, and adept in compliment and even flattery, he was a young man well calculated to win the attention, affection, and love of an impressionable young woman like Natalie de L'Age. Their conversation was carried on in French, and it must be confessed that there is no tongue in which the words of love sound sweeter. The word "*amour*" is so expressive that it is no wonder it is often chosen by ardent suitors instead of its rather cold and unsympathetic English equivalent. Compare the two phrases, "*Vive l'amour!*" and "Long live love!" and the English expression, whether we consider it strengthened or weakened by its alliteration, it must be confessed, cannot approach in vocal force its Gallic counterpart.

Certain it was, that Natalie's heart beat faster and the rose color mounted to her cheeks, when the gallant Frenchman protested his love for her, offered to make her a countess, and to take her back to sunny France with him at once. Like the lover who won the Lady of Lyons, he expatiated upon the size of his estate, the magnificence of his château, and the beauty of its surroundings.

"Paris is the heaven of the world!" he cried, imbuing his language with characteristic French conceit, "and la Comtesse de Joliette will be its shining star!"

But there was another young man in the company, American born, who had long been a resident of Paris. Like Joseph Alston, he was a South

Carolinian, but he possessed neither rice plantations nor slaves, being, in fact, an *attaché* of the American Embassy at the capital of France. Young and ambitious, he had high hopes of ultimately winning great distinction in the diplomatic service of his country. To do this successfully, he must marry, and entertain his diplomatic associates and those members of the French government with whom he was brought into official contact.

When a man secures as his companion for life a woman who satisfies both his heart and mind, he has a right to consider himself happy indeed. Maj. Thomas Sumter thought that Paris would be a heaven upon earth if he could install Natalie de L'Age as the head of his household. His heart was satisfied with her beauty and her somewhat wayward but loving disposition. His mind experienced gratification at the thought, that, being of French extraction and speaking the language fluently, she would be of great service to him, both in his official duties and in his business intercourse with the French government and other embassies.

It is, perhaps, needless to say, that both young ladies pleaded for delay before committing themselves by decisive answers. Natalie took refuge behind her contract, or rather, agreement, with Colonel Burr, to remain with Theodosia for an indefinite period. She could say nothing until she had spoken to one who, she declared, treated her like a daughter.

Miss Theodosia reminded Mr. Alston that Aristotle had expressed the opinion, that a man should

not marry until he was thirty-six. "But his advice can hardly apply in this instance, Miss Burr," was his reply. "If we should follow it, when I am thirty-six you would be thirty-one; and even Aristotle could not have meant that a young lady should remain single until she was thirty-one. Only one condition of affairs could possibly lead me to agree with Aristotle."

"And what may that be?" Theodosia asked.

"I am twenty-two," was the reply. "If you were but three years of age, I would be willing to follow his advice, but even then I should consider that many happy years of life had been lost in deference to the dictum of a philosopher who wrote for his time and people and not for ours."

The next morning, both young ladies expressed to Colonel Burr their desire for a private interview. They had intended, at first, to see him singly; but Natalie prevailed upon Theodosia to consent to her accompanying her, and they faced the man whom they both looked upon as father, with an air approaching that of two criminals brought before a judge for sentence.

Probably Burr surmised the object of their visit, and by a series of leading questions, deftly formed and cleverly put, was soon in possession of a full knowledge of the situation. He immediately put them at their ease by expressing his pleasure at the confidence they had shown in him by asking his advice.

"Come, let us reason together," he said, quoting, probably unconsciously, the words of the Prophet Isaiah. "You will pardon me, ladies, if

in what I am going to say I look at the matter from a legal, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, a judicial point of view." He changed his position so that their faces were in profile instead of being exactly opposite his own. Then he resumed:

"I see before me several pictures, each of which I will describe. The first of these is of a great plantation in a Southern State. It covers thousands of acres and the labor of the toilers upon its soil brings in a great revenue to its owner. He is young, handsome, talented, full of ambition, and destined to hold high positions in the government of his own State and, perhaps, in that of the country. His social standing is secure, and to his wife he will bring its advantages and that of sufficient wealth to sustain it, and they would descend to his children." There was silence for several minutes, and then Burr went on:

"I see a comfortably but not luxuriously furnished apartment, in which a man sits at a table, engaged in writing. I look over his shoulder and learn that he is an author. His income is not derived from the labor of others, but from the creations of his own brain, written down by his own hand. But the market for such wares is not so sure, nor the pay so adequate, as for the products of the soil. These last, every one must have, for they are the necessaries of life; but books are luxuries, and one may live without them. A young woman enters the room and takes a seat beside him. With a face glowing with enthusiasm and a voice ringing with passion, he reads to her the words which he has written. She listens

intently, and when he closes, expresses her delight and her belief that his book will make him famous. Surely no man in the world so greatly needs the love, attention, and appreciation of a wife as he who aims to instruct, to amuse, or to guide his fellow-men."

Turning to his daughter, he said: "From personal experience, what I have related I know to be true. Your mother, Theodosia, was the best woman and the finest lady I have ever known."

Again he shifted the position of his chair so that his gaze was fixed, not upon the faces of those whom he regarded as daughters, but upon the window opposite, through which the morning sun came dancing in upon the highly polished floor of the great library where they sat.

"I see another picture," he went on. "The scene is not in America, but in a far-off land. One of the most beautiful mansions in that country belongs to a young count, who is now travelling in the United States to study our institutions and people. He has another object in view, which, I infer, is to transplant to his native land a young lady, known for her beauty, wit, and social accomplishments, and to make her the mistress of his château. As his wife, she will have the *entrée* to the best society in France, and when she accompanies him to Paris he knows that his American wife will grace its *salons* and make him an object of envy. Surely no picture of a brighter future could be presented to the eyes of a prospective bride.

"But there is another picture that must be

considered at the same time. A young American, as handsome and more ambitious than his rival, because he must make his fortune instead of inheriting it, also sues for the hand of the woman who may be a countess if she wishes. The young American may yet become an ambassador, but that, of course, is problematical. Even if he does, he will probably never own a *château* like that of his rival, the count, nor have an equal revenue. Of his love and devotion there can be no question, and perhaps the young lady whom he wishes to make his wife may prefer to end her days in the land where both were born, rather than in a foreign country."

Once more Burr became silent. The young girls arose, each passed an arm about the other's waist; they walked to the window and looked out upon the grounds, whose natural beauties were glorified by the sunlight, and saw, still farther on, the river, which glittered beneath it. Thinking the same thoughts and influenced by the same feelings, they turned to Burr. It was Natalie who spoke:

"But you have not expressed any opinion as to which proposals you think we should accept."

"Nor do I intend to," was Burr's reply. "If anything unhappy should occur as the result of either of the marriages, I do not wish to be considered responsible in any way. You must follow the dictates of your own hearts. I have painted some pictures for you to gaze upon. You young ladies must decide in which of these pictures you are to be represented in the future."

CHAPTER XXVIII

A THREE-CORNERED FIGHT

THEODOSIA accepted the rich planter and Natalie the poor *attaché*. Burr neither approved nor disapproved when his daughters announced their choices to him; his only stipulation was that the weddings should not occur for a year. In no other way did he interfere with the marriage negotiations or their consummation.

Mr. Alston was somewhat impatient at this restraint, but her father's wish was law to her, and Theodosia was inflexible. Major Sumter was pleased, rather than otherwise, at the delay, for it gave him an opportunity to return to France and make suitable preparations for the reception of his bride.

The years of anticipation move with leaden wings; those of realization flit by as do the butterfly or the humming-bird. The eventful day came at last, however, and the proud father gave his daughters a grand wedding at Richmond Hill. Yes, he was proud, but yet sorrowful. Since the death of his wife, Theodosia had been the mistress of his mansion; Natalie had been her beloved companion; and in the society of these bright young women he had found that delightful home recreation, so pleasing and restful to the busy man at the close of each day of great mental or

physical activity. Now, all was to be changed; the loving daughter was to leave him alone to go South to her new home, while her companion was to cross the sea, and her beautiful face and cheerful voice would, perhaps, never be seen or heard again by father or daughter.

When a young man loses the woman whom he has chosen as his companion and helpmate for life, he is but following the promptings of nature when he looks about him to find another, to take, if not to fill the place of the lost one. When an elderly man is called upon to mourn the loss of one with whom the better part of his life has been passed in comfort and happiness, he may still look forward to another union; for to such, a wifeless home is the saddest of all sad places. The problem that faces the man of middle age, thus bereft of his consort, is much greater than that which confronts the younger or the older man. In the opinion of his relatives and friends, if not in his own, he is too old to marry a woman much younger than himself; while from his own point of view, he is too young to marry one who is much older than himself. Besides, the man who has thus half tasted the joys of a happy married life is fearful of making a mistake which may not only render the remainder of his life unhappy by inevitable daily comparisons, but may even efface from his memory, either partially or wholly, the remembrance of happy days gone by. These thoughts passed through Burr's mind as he thought of the perhaps, joyless years to come, bereft as he was of wife and child.

The discarded suitors were gentlemen, and met their fates as such. The poet, who had been attracted by Theodosia's education, wit and beauty, testified his to-be-lifelong friendship by means of a poem, which conveyed to the recipient a full comprehension of the honest devotion which had filled his heart, but which he now, as in duty bound, put aside forever, substituting therefor only the lightly binding ties which unite those who may think of each other often, but seldom meet.

Count Jérôme de Joliette was more practical. "I am a very rich man," he said to Major Sumter, "and you are a very happy one, or ought to be." Then, with true French gallantry, he added: "I see now that it was too much to expect that kind Fortune would give to me not only birth and wealth, but also the lovely woman whom you are to lead to the altar to-morrow. I will be honest with you, Major, and confess that I envy you. If Natalie had loved me, instead of you, I should have been the happiest of men; but I am still happy when I think that the care of her future has fallen to one for whom I entertain feelings of the highest respect and regard. Now that you have heard my confession, Major, I am sure that you will not object to your future bride receiving from me a little gift which I have purchased as a bridal present for her, for money is really of so little value to me that the spending of it is not a virtue — only a necessity."

The little gift to which the count referred was a beautiful necklace of diamonds and rubies,

one fully as valuable as he would have bestowed upon her had she become the Countess de Joliette.

The election to choose the third President of the United States was close at hand. Mrs. Alston and Mrs. Sumter, with their husbands' consent, decided to remain at Richmond Hill until the issue of the contest was known.

Washington had served two terms of four years each, and it was but natural that the friends of President John Adams should consider it his due to be rewarded with a like tenure of office. It was known to many, however, that in his cabinet were two forces, represented by two strong men, each striving for the mastery. Alexander Hamilton was the acknowledged chief of the Federalist or monarchical party, while Thomas Jefferson represented the Republican idea, which was a direct antithesis to that entertained by the advocates of a strong central government.

Burr had in many ways testified his sympathy with the common people rather than with the aristocratic landowners or capitalists. He had seen, as had many others, that while Hamilton's scheme of funding the national debt established considerable national credit, it had, at the same time, taken from the pockets of the common people, including among these the officers and soldiers who had fought the battles of the Revolution, at least sixty millions of dollars, which had passed into the hands of the landowners and the moneyed class. The funding scheme was a great evil. It made the poor, poorer — and the rich, richer. At the same time, it supplied Hamilton and his party

with that powerful sinew of war, without which no great political contest can be carried on successfully — money. Those who obtained this great financial benefit naturally became his supporters.

It was with the dominant political power and their moneyed allies that Burr decided to wage war. During his military career he had been a strict disciplinarian. He had developed remarkable powers as an organizer, and he decided to employ these powers in the coming political campaign. He was to be the general-in-chief, of course, but he called to his aid hundreds of the young men of the city, who believed in him and were willing to carry out his orders implicitly. Among these, William P. Van Ness was the one to whom Burr first confided his plan of campaign. He sent for him and they had a long conference one morning in the great library.

“Van Ness,” Burr began, “if we are to win a victory, it must be secured by the adoption of new tactics which cannot be imitated by our political opponents, at least in this contest. I have sent for you in order that I may make known my proposed plan of operation. It commends itself to you, we will choose a third to whom to confide it; to this number we will add a fourth, and so on, until our political staff is complete. Then we will begin active work, but we will not disclose our plan of warfare to our opponents. When they comprehend what we have done, it will be the proper time to inform them how we have done it.”

Burr then spread out upon the library table a

large map of the city of New York which had been cut up into districts, the boundaries of which were indicated by various colored lines.

“My plan,” said Burr, “is to have a tried and trusty man in charge of each of these districts. It will be his duty to make a list of every voter in his district, and to ascertain, by some means or other, his political affiliations. These lists, when completed, must be sent to me, and we will then decide to what extent we shall be justified in calling upon our friends for personal or financial support. Some, who have little money, will be glad to serve us with voice and pen; while many, who have riches and the natural indolence which accompanies them, will be glad to escape from further service by supplying us with funds.”

This was the general plan, which was soon perfected in its minor details, and Van Ness and the other members of the political staff chosen by Burr began the work, the fruition of which was to have so great an influence upon the future of the country.

Burr now instituted a new phase of generalship. He felt that he could rely upon the rank and file of his political army, and also upon his company and regimental commanders; but now the generals of divisions were to be chosen, and Burr felt that in this he would not be able to command, but would be obliged to entreat. His idea was to have the ticket of the Republican party in the State of New York composed of its best known and most reliable men.

His first visit was to Gov. George Clinton, who

was an opponent of Thomas Jefferson. The sturdy old man made a determined fight; he at first refused point blank to have his name connected in any way with that of Jefferson. But Burr was a profound reader of the minds of men and born to control their destinies. The old governor finally decided to head the ticket, but upon the condition that he should not be called upon to say a single word in support of Thomas Jefferson, the Republican candidate for President. "I will keep my mouth shut," he said; "I will say nothing; I will do nothing."

Burr was satisfied with this, and proceeded to complete his ticket, which bore many other distinguished names, those of Gen. Horatio Gates and Brockholst Livingston being among them. By his political generalship, Burr secured for his ticket not only the names of the strongest men in the State, but also settled some long existing feuds between rival families.

The contest was over! At the close of the memorable political battle of three days' duration, it was found, to the surprise of all, both Federalists and Republicans, that the State of New York, which, up to that time, had been the stronghold of Alexander Hamilton, the Federalist leader, had changed its political complexion, being carried by the Republicans by a majority of nearly five hundred. The news came in slowly from the other States, for the means of communication were primitive and tedious.

Hamilton had planned to defeat John Adams by detaching one of his supporters, who would

cast a vote for Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, thus making him President and degrading Adams to the second place. He had evidently counted on a very close contest, since the value of one electoral vote was to be paramount. The result sustained his theory, but, strange to relate, the tie vote was not between Adams and Pinckney, but between Jefferson and Burr, who each had a clear majority of seven votes over Adams, who had the next highest number. It then became apparent that, according to the Constitution, the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives and the battle would have to be waged all over again. It was the last struggle of the dominant party. If the Republicans won, it would be a death blow to the Federalists.

Hamilton saw that his party still held the balance of power. How should it be used? He had a hearty contempt for the common people and had expressed his feelings in this respect on many occasions. The people did not trust him, nor he them. To defeat their will would be a pastime for him. How could this be done in the easiest possible way? He thought of a scheme. He wrote to Governor Jay, suggesting that the old Legislature of the State of New York, which was Federalist, should be called together and Federalist electors chosen by them who could be certified by the governor instead of those elected by the people at the polls. Governor Jay was an honorable man and declined to take part in such a despicable manœuvre.

Defeated in this nefarious project, Hamilton

turned his attention to the opening of the contest in the House of Representatives. He decided that of two evils he would choose the lesser — that is, the lesser in his opinion. He hated both Jefferson and Burr, but naturally he hated Burr more than he did Jefferson. Besides, from his knowledge of Jefferson, he felt sure that the Federalists could make better terms with him than they could with Burr, the enemy of Federalism and the lifelong opponent of its chieftain.

But how could he best deceive the people as to his intentions? It would not do for him to openly espouse Jefferson, but his allies could do this without compromising him. Again, he must do all that he could to undermine Burr and turn the current of public feeling against him. This could not be done by simply supporting Jefferson. No, he must call upon his allies again; but this time upon an entirely different class. He had recourse to the campaign followers of political armies — those who serve, not for love of principle, but for love of lucre. How could he best place Burr before the public in a false position? Manifestly, by having his allies insinuate that Burr was disposed to bargain with the Federalists in order to secure his election to the Presidency.

One morning, while the balloting was still going on in the House of Representatives, Mr. Alston requested the privilege of an interview with his father-in-law, Colonel Burr. "You know," said he, when they were seated in the library, "that although I have taken no part in the present political contest, I am naturally interested in the

outcome. No doubt your party adherents bring to you the gossip of the political world. The question which I am going to ask you is not suggested for political reasons, but for personal ones."

"Go on," said Colonel Burr; "speak your mind freely, Joseph, and I promise to answer you with equal freedom and candor."

"I am," said Mr. Alston, "a fortunate man in being the husband of your daughter. I feel that I am to be still more fortunate in bearing so close a relationship to the third President of the United States."

"Not so!" cried Burr, starting to his feet. 'You are wrong, Joseph! That will never be! Excuse me," he added, "but why should you form such an opinion?"

"Because," replied Mr. Alston, "and I am going to speak frankly, for you told me to—because I hear upon every side that you are engaged in negotiations with the Federalists in order to secure their political support and to defeat Mr. Jefferson."

Colonel Burr smiled. "'*They say*' has killed many a rising man, Joseph, but I do not mean to be killed, politically, by such unfounded gossip." Rising, he went to a cabinet and took a letter therefrom, which he handed to his son-in-law. "It was written the middle of last December to General Smith, the leader of the Republican party in the House of Representatives. I assure you that it is a copy of the letter sent to him, *verbatim et literatim*."

Mr. Alston opened the sheet of foolscap and read the following:

“NEW YORK, Dec. 16, 1800.

“DEAR SIR :

“It is highly improbable that I shall have an equal number of votes with Mr. Jefferson ; but if such should be the result, every man who knows me ought to know that I would utterly disclaim all competition. Be assured that the Federal party can entertain no wish for such an exchange. As to my friends, they would dishonor my views and insult my feelings by a suspicion that I would submit to be instrumental in counteracting the wishes and expectations of the people of the United States. And I now constitute you my proxy to declare these sentiments if the occasion should require.

“A. BURR.

“GEN. SAMUEL SMITH.”

Alston sprang to his feet and grasped Colonel Burr's hand. “You could have shown me nothing,” he cried, “to give me greater pleasure than this letter. Your daughter Theodosia is the personification of honor in thought, and word, and deed, and I am proud to learn that this admirable quality has been inherited from a noble father.” As he uttered these words, overcome by the strength of his emotions, he threw his arms about Colonel Burr's neck and dropped his head upon his shoulder.

Burr gently detached himself from the embrace, still clasping his son-in-law's hands. He looked him in the face and said, slowly and deliberately :

“You are right, Joseph. It would have been a grievous sin in me to bring dishonor upon the name of my beloved daughter and upon the head of an affectionate son, for so I regard you now and shall always so consider you.” Then, in turn, he threw his arms about the young man's neck, and they stood thus for a moment, heart to heart.

The close of the contest came. On the thirty-

sixth ballot Thomas Jefferson was chosen President and Aaron Burr Vice-President. The first to congratulate Burr upon his elevation to the second position in the government of the American people was his trusted lieutenant, Van Ness. After the congratulations were over, Van Ness said, with an air of intensity, which was his distinguishing characteristic:

"You might have been President yourself, Colonel."

"How so?" was the inquiry.

"Well, one way of doing it," Van Ness replied, "would have been to follow the same tactics that Hamilton did, or tried to, between Adams and Pinckney. His military renown, we all know, was derived from his close proximity to Washington. We must confess that he is a good lawyer, but we who understand the business know that he is a mighty poor politician. You could easily have detached one vote from Jefferson and have secured the first place."

"But I didn't," was Burr's reply, "and I had good reasons for not doing so."

"Well, I have learned," said Van Ness, "not to argue with you, and it is equally futile, I suppose, to dwell upon what you might have done. But see what Jefferson has done! I have it on the best authority that the electoral vote from Georgia was not properly certified to, and the tellers knew it when they passed it to Jefferson. They supposed that he would announce the informality to the Senate, but instead of doing so, he declared the vote as being regularly and properly cast for

himself, and it was this that made the tie between you."

"I attach no importance to that," was Burr's reply. "It was an informality, to be sure, but the intention of the electors was obvious. They did not mean to vote for me for President, and to have secured the office by such an informality would have been as discreditable to me as Jefferson's action is to him."

"But that is not all!" cried Van Ness. "You would have been elected if you had used the slightest exertion to secure the place."

"I know it," said Burr, "but I didn't. I had good reasons for not doing so. I talked it all over with Joseph, and we both agreed that the course I took was the right one."

"Bayard says that you could have been elected easily," Van Ness replied.

"He ought to know," was Burr's evasive comment.

"He does know," said Van Ness. "He knows that Jefferson has forsaken his ultra-Republican principles so far as to promise that he will not oppose the building of a navy, nor do anything to shake the public credit. He has also agreed to keep Latimer in as collector at Philadelphia, and McLane at Wilmington. This, of course, was done to satisfy Bayard and some of the other Federalists. Just what further price Jefferson paid in order to buy his election, I do not, at present, know; but I prophesy that he will become an ardent advocate of civil service reform on true British principles, and that it will be as hard to

get a Federalist out of office as it is to make a pig go the way you want him to."

"Your simile is forcible, if not exactly genteel," commented Burr, with a laugh.

Van Ness crossed the room, and taking a book from one of the shelves, opened it and turned the leaves over rapidly.

"Are you looking for a precedent?" asked Burr. "I fear you will find none. The case is singularly anomalous in its nature."

"No," replied Van Ness, "I was not looking for a precedent, but for a quotation from Shakespeare, which I wish to read to one who might have been President if he had followed the great poet's advice."

Burr approached his friend. "I am anxious to learn," said he, "what Shakespeare said that is applicable to me."

"Here it is!" cried Van Ness; "and he read with a strenuous voice:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

"I will acknowledge," said Burr, "that the first lines of the quotation may be applicable in some degree to me, but I sincerely hope that the concluding lines do not presage my future."

"And so do I, with all my heart!" cried Van Ness, as he grasped Burr's hand; "but Julius Cæsar met his political and physical defeat at the hands of a presumed friend. I pray to God, my dear Burr, that such may not be your fate."

Withdrawing his hand quickly from that of Colonel Burr, he left the room without another word.

The day was fast approaching when the two young brides must leave Richmond Hill, that meant home and father, and go to those new homes provided for them by their husbands. Only a few days more would elapse before Theodosia and Natalie would be called upon to part, perhaps forever. It was about an hour after breakfast, and the young wives were seated in one of the pleasantest rooms in the great mansion, the windows of which looked out upon the finely kept grounds and the broad expanse of river beyond. Theodosia was reading a book, while Natalie intermittently embroidered a sampler or looked out of the window. Turning to Theodosia, Natalie said:

“What are you reading?”

“English history,” was the reply; “a story of the contest between the Houses of York and Lancaster, which has been called the ‘War of the Roses.’”

“I hate history!” cried Natalie, “but I love roses. Come, Theo, put away your book and we will walk down to the river. I can see no good in reading about what dead men have done. I am more interested in what live men are going to do.”

Theodosia’s reply was characteristic: “Nations, like men, Natalie, learn by experience. The common people gain their experience from the events which occur in the lives of the people about them, while statesmen and diplomats study the history of nations, that they may know how to govern their own actions.”

“But,” said Natalie, with a laugh, “you are to be neither a statesman nor a diplomat. You are to be a good little housewife, the same as I am. Why should you bother your little head with what kings, and queens, and princes did hundreds of years ago? Will it enable you to look after your husband’s house any better, or contribute to his comfort, when he comes home tired from a hard day’s work?”

“It may do the latter,” said Theodosia, calmly. “I look forward to passing the evenings with Joseph as I have done so many years with father. In reading books which contain the products of the minds, yes, the souls of great men and women, one becomes inspired. Pardon me, Natalie, but you resemble those people who say they do not like certain kinds of food because they have never tasted them. Now you have never read history, but you say you do not like it. Now listen.”

“In her father’s house,” said Natalie, in a tone of banter, “Queen Theodosia’s will is law.”

Theodosia then read the life story of Richard, Earl of Warwick. Natalie listened attentively, and when the reader closed the book, said:

“Well, Theodosia, that is really very interesting. That Earl of Warwick was a brave, noble man, but I don’t think much of that King Edward the Fourth. I hope, if there are to be any more kings of England named Edward, that they will be more honorable men.” Natalie paused for a moment, as if thinking; then she went on: “And do you know, Theodosia, I have been thinking, since you have been reading, that Jefferson may

turn out to be another Edward the Fourth and will treat father in the same way that the king of England did the noble Earl of Warwick. He placed Edward upon the throne, and father has put Jefferson in the Presidential chair. The President knows that father is stronger, politically, than he is, and a man always hates a dangerous rival. I am not a prophet, Theo, but you may tell me some day whether what I am now saying comes true or not.

“Now, Queen Theodosia, you must obey me. I have been your faithful servitor, and now you must pay heed to my wishes ;” and the two young girls, for they were both young in years and in heart, twined their arms about each other and walked towards the river upon whose bosom floated the ships, which in a few days were to carry one to the East and the other to the South.



Theodosia and Natalie at Richmond Hill.

The two young girls . . . twined their arms about each other and walked towards the river. *Page 352.*



CHAPTER XXIX

AN AMERICAN WARWICK

“NEW YORK, April 2, 1804.

“MY DEAR NATALIE :

IT seems an age since I received your last loving letter. I intended to write to you before leaving Charleston for this place, but failed to carry out my good resolution. My only excuse is, that while there, the demands of society, of which my husband is a prominent member, the multiplicity of household duties, and the accumulation of motherly cares consequent upon the temporary illness of my only son, took every spare moment that I had at my disposal. In fact, in order to properly perform the duties which fell to me, I was often obliged to trench upon hours which should have been devoted to recreation or rest.

“Oh, Natalie, you should see my boy — my little Aaron. Of course, you know that I named him after his grandfather — Aaron Burr Alston. I knew of no prouder or more honorable name to give him, and I trust that he will live, and if possible, add new honors to it.

“When he was first able to speak, the word ‘grandfather’ was too cumbersome for his infant lips, and he transformed it into ‘Gamp.’ Father was so pleased with his new title, that he, in turn,

applied a perversion, or rather, an extension of it, to his grandson, calling him either 'Gampillo,' following the Italian form, or 'Gampillus,' according to the Latin.

"No one who is not a mother can know the joys which fill her heart when she looks upon her offspring. I remember that mother used to tell me how she alternated between hope and fear when I was sick, and how she prayed that I might recover, for home would have been so lonely without me. I can now understand her feelings. If my boy should die, much as I love my husband and my father, the ties of maternity would draw me irresistibly towards him — and I should pray that God would take me to him as soon as possible.

"Thanks to the mercy of Divine Providence, we are all well. Joseph was obliged to remain in Charleston to attend to business matters, but will join me here within a month. Father is well and is deeply immersed in legal business and politics. I am afraid, indeed, that he is now devoting more time to politics than to law. But, as the storytellers say, thereby hangs a tale which I must tell you before you can thoroughly understand the situation of affairs.

"Father has offered himself as a candidate for the position of governor of New York, and the election will take place in a few days. If elected, he will, naturally, resign his office as Vice-President and take up his residence in Albany, where I was born. I love Richmond Hill, but I think we should all be fully as happy if we were farther removed from this caldron of bitter and often vindictive political strife.

“Do you remember that morning when I read to you about the War of the Roses, particularly the story of Richard, Earl of Warwick? Do you recall what you said when I had finished reading? How you prophesied—I am sure that was the word you used—that Thomas Jefferson would treat father in the same manner that Edward IV. did the Earl of Warwick? I well remember the fact, that you asked me to let you know in case your words became true.

“Natalie, you were a prophet, although I am sure you did not know it at the time, for your prediction has been verified and in what seems to me a most remarkable manner.

“You know that I detest two-faced men and women—those persons who say one thing to your face and say it otherwise behind your back. President Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton are both, to outward appearances, on the best possible terms of social intimacy with father; but Joseph has told me what he knows himself and what he has learned from outside sources, and I feel convinced that both these honorable gentlemen are working in an underhand manner to defeat father’s future political aspirations.

“I have been unable to determine from what I have learned, whether the President and the leader of the Federalists are acting in accord with a mutual understanding, or whether the concert of action is simply a coincidence, each pursuing his own course independent of the other and unknown to him. Be this as it may, the result will be the same—father’s defeat as regards the governorship,

and the prevention of any further rise in national politics.

“I look upon the whole affair as a conspiracy to kill, politically, a dangerous rival on the one hand and an expected rival on the other. I should not blame General Hamilton so much for working against father, if he would proceed in an open manner—above board, as the people say; but Joseph says he carries on his campaign against father in the most secret manner. He writes confidential letters to friends, and often to opponents, in which he abuses father unmercifully. Joseph says he accuses him of all the crimes in the calendar. He has one comparison which he rarely omits from his letters. To his mind, father closely resembles the Roman conspirator, Catiline, and General Hamilton either thinks honestly or gives his correspondents to understand, that father is another Catiline, conspiring to overthrow the government of the United States and become its military dictator. In some of his letters he calls father an embryo Cæsar. Now this would all be very laughable were it not for the possible result should his assertions be believed and control the political action of those who credit them on such slight and wholly unsupported evidence.

“There can be no excuse, however, for the course which the President has taken—no palliation of the insult which he has offered to one who was chosen to the next highest position in the government of the nation. He has stooped so low as to engage the services of an alien Englishman, named James Cheetham, to carry on his warfare against

father. The price paid for such service is not known, but will probably be adjusted by the giving of official advertising, and political appointment to Cheetham's friends.

"James Cheetham is the proprietor of a newspaper. He is a Republican, but belongs to the Clintonian rather than to the Jeffersonian wing of the party. It is by this very fact that the essence of the conspiracy shows itself. To depose father from his position as Vice-President, it will be necessary to have a strong man to put forward in his stead. Joseph tells me that that strong man will be George Clinton, the very man who, four years ago, refused to do anything to secure Jefferson's election and who agreed only after long solicitation and earnest entreaties from father, to head the Republican electoral ticket.

"I hardly know how to express my opinion of the man, Cheetham. He had been tried twice for libel, been adjudged guilty each time, and sentenced to pay a fine. Joseph says, that if father would sue him for libel, he would be enjoined from publishing any more untruthful statements about father. But he says it would be of no use to advise such a course of action, for he knows father looks upon Cheetham with such sublime contempt, that he would not, of his own accord, notice his attacks.

"Let me tell you one more thing that he has said. He makes the direct charge, that when the balloting for President was going on in the House of Representatives in 1801, father sent an emissary to Washington to secure the votes of the Federal-

ists and defeat Jefferson. You know, Natalie, this could not be true, for during all the time that the balloting was going on, father was with us at Richmond Hill, and he could have had no callers from Washington or been engaged in any such negotiations, for he gave up nearly all of his time to us, both preceding and following the day of our marriages.

“Cheetham has written nine letters, as he calls them, that have been printed in pamphlet form, in which he presents this charge. He says that he was informed by two gentlemen of great respectability, who heard it from another well-known gentleman, that father had been engaged in such negotiations. In one of his letters he says, that a Mr. David Ogden rode, in company with father, in a stage coach for a long distance, and that they were undoubtedly engaged in arranging a course of action for Mr. Ogden to follow when he reached Washington. This Cheetham went so far as to forge the signature of a stage driver to a statement, in which he declared that he drove the coach in which father and Mr. Ogden rode; but this statement was proven to be a falsehood by the testimony of an honorable political opponent. It turned out that the Mr. Ogden referred to was General Hamilton’s law partner, but he was too much of a gentleman to become a party to such a base calumny, and he denied publicly that he was in the stage coach with father, or that he had any conversation with him on political matters. Despite Mr. Ogden’s statement, however, this man Cheetham repeats this charge, and others of a like

nature, against father in every issue of his paper, and will probably keep on doing so up to the day of the election. I am afraid that this is not all. I fear that he has under way some deep, dark plot against father, which will not become known until too late.

“So you see, my dear Natalie, your words have come true. Richard, Earl of Warwick, placed Edward IV. upon the throne; but when he was seated there and entrenched in power, he looked upon the man who had made him, as a possible rival, and both feared and hated him. He went deliberately to work to deprive the man who had made him a king, of his offices, his wealth, his power, and eventually brought him to his death.

“So, too, Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, looks upon Aaron Burr, the man who made him President, as a possible rival. He both hates and fears him, and means to accomplish his political downfall—even as King Edward did that of the Earl of Warwick. I know that you must be weary, by this time, from reading this long story, and I will refrain from further infliction. As to the result of the election, I both hope and fear. In a few days it will be known, and I will write to you again.

“Father sends his love to daughter Natalie and to her husband. He is greatly pleased to learn that Thomas has shown the possession of so much talent as a diplomat and that a republic which is apt to be ungrateful has not been unmindful of it, but has rewarded him with promotion. To father’s expressions of affection I add those of Joseph,

Gampillo, and myself. If the post-office charges you at the usual letter rates for the great amount of love thus enclosed, the expense to you will be great indeed; but I know that you will pay it gladly for the sake of

“Your loving

“THEODOSIA.”

CHAPTER XXX

A DEATH-BED CONFESSION

ABOUT the middle of April, less than a fortnight after Theodosia wrote the letter to Natalie, she received a letter from her husband, informing her that little Aaron was sick. Mr. Alston stated that his condition was not dangerous and no serious results were anticipated, but that he felt it was his duty, as a father, to tell her, as a mother — leaving it to the dictates of her own heart as to whether she should return home immediately or await further advices from him.

Theodosia lost no time in making preparations for her homeward journey. This was performed overland and took considerable time. Upon her arrival in Charleston, she found, to her delight, that her son had completely recovered his health. It was too late to regret the step which she had taken, but she wished she were again with her father during the political contest, which was now at its height.

She received several letters from him, written in a jocular manner, which conveyed no real information as to the probable result of the great political battle. At length came a letter from him, dated April 25, which contained these significant words:

“The election is lost by a great majority; *so much the better.*”

“So much the better!” Theodosia repeated these words over and over again. Did her father really think so? Did he actually mean what he had written? With all her heart she hoped that he did. For if so, he would now give up further attempts to secure political advancement, and devote all his time and attention to his profession. The letter did not contain a single disparaging word concerning his political opponents, nor did it refer in any way to the devices to which they had resorted in order to compass his defeat.

At the beginning of the Revolution, Madam von Ketterer had been in very comfortable circumstances from a financial point of view. During the war, however, much of her property had been destroyed by either Cowboys or Skinners, and some of her money had been lost in unprofitable adventures. In the early part of the year 1804, she became so reduced in circumstances, that in order to retain possession of the old Dutch mansion she was obliged to devise some means of adding to her scanty income. She finally decided to take boarders.

The city had increased very fast in population, and, incidentally, in manufactures and trade. Many of the young men, attracted to the city by the prospect of lucrative employment, had been used to comfortable homes, and Madam von Ketterer's commodious house, with its beautiful garden, was soon filled with a well-satisfied body of clerks, bookkeepers, and artificers. The old lady was a fine housekeeper and insisted upon doing the greater part of the household work;

but her duties finally became so exacting that she was obliged to have a hired man, and at times a young girl to assist her.

Among her boarders was a gentleman who did not appear to have any regular employment. He was apparently about seventy years of age and had given the name of James Billings. He seemed to be not only weak physically, but to be suffering from some mental trouble, and kept his room nearly all the time, rarely going out of it, except after nightfall.

Mr. Billings spent much of his time in reading and writing. One day, Madam von Ketterer told him that her husband had owned a large library, and she asked him if he did not wish to read some of the books. He gladly accepted the offer, and she showed him the way to the room formerly used by her husband as a library, and in which everything had remained undisturbed since his death.

One day, Mr. Billings, while looking at a book, discovered a letter addressed to Miss Adelaide Clifton in a handwriting which he recognized. The sight of it brought back the memory of events which he gladly would have banished from his mind forever. So great was his curiosity, however, that he decided to read the letter. On opening it, he found that it was dated a few days previous to the time when he, at the instigation of Colonel Hamilton, had begun the circulation of scandalous stories regarding her.

He pondered for awhile before he carried out his intention of reading the letter. As he held it

in his hand, he looked upon it as a coming justification of the course which he had followed years before. It would, undoubtedly, show the intimate relations which existed between Burr and the young girl.

The old man, who had lived long enough to repent the follies not only of his youth, but also those of his middle age, held the letter in his hand, overjoyed at its possession. He read the letter, and to his astonishment found that it was couched in the most formal and polite manner. It stated that official duties which could not be postponed would prevent the writer from accepting the invitation to form one of a party at her aunt's house on a certain evening. He thanked her for her courtesy in extending the invitation, and expressed his gratification that her aunt had proposed to add such an unknown individual as himself to the galaxy of notable men and women who would doubtless be present on that occasion. Then followed the short but well-known signature, "A. Burr."

The perusal of this letter, the paper of which was discolored with age and the ink faded, did not supply James Billings with the self-justification which he had anticipated. Instead, he found in it reasons for more severe self-condemnation than he believed he could ever experience. He tried to find some consolation in thinking that the letter, after all, might not indicate the actual relations which existed between the then Major Burr and Miss Clifton. He said to himself that the young man was too shrewd to write a letter which

might incriminate either of them if it fell into the hands of a third person. But this self-supplied explanation was not satisfactory, and as he sat in his room alone, the thought came home to him that the course that he had taken, resulting in the young girl's death, was even worse than a cold-blooded murder would have been. If he had killed her at once, her sufferings would have been ended at once; but the plan which he had followed of secretly traducing her good name, had made her a maniac, had shattered the fond hopes of her relatives and friends, and after a long period of mental torture, had brought her a tardy release.

He became moody and restless, finally falling into a state of melancholy which eventually broke down both his physical and mental strength. He was forced to take to his bed and send for a doctor. But the latter told Madam von Ketterer that nothing could be done for him, as he was an old man, with his constitution shattered, and he could live but a short time longer.

Madam von Ketterer tried to prevail upon her boarder to take some of her home-made decoctions of herbs which she had prepared, but Mr. Billings shook his head and declined them with thanks. The old lady was still hopeful that when spring came, her patient, for so she considered him, the doctor having given him up, would improve, and that summer would put him on his feet again. But her earnest hopes and fervent prayers were not answered, and the middle of June found him so weak, that even she gave up hope, and suggested that a clergyman should be summoned.

"It would be of no use to send for a clergyman," said Mr. Billings; "I am afraid he can do me no good. Whatever my sins may have been, I expect to be punished therefor and I prefer it to be that way; but if I do not feel better within a day or two, I shall ask you to send for a lawyer. There are some matters which must be attended to before I die."

The morning of the sixteenth of June gave no indication of the tempestuous manner in which the day was to close. The blue dome above was specked with only a few clouds and the sun was shining brightly.

Madam von Ketterer had a visitor early that morning in the person of her only niece, Mrs. Daniel Prentiss, who had come to spend the day with her aunt. She had never ceased to love the old garden, and as soon as possible after her arrival, put on her sunbonnet and said she was going out to look at the flowers.

"Cut some and make a nosegay, Adelaide, for one of my boarders is sick and perhaps he will enjoy looking at them—and they smell so sweet, too," said her aunt, as she followed Adelaide to the door.

Mrs. Prentiss made quite a large bouquet by the time she reached the hedge which separated the garden from the roadway. She looked down the road, but no one was in sight. Then she glanced in the opposite direction—a man on horseback was approaching.

Her first inclination was to turn away—but why should she? So she maintained her position,

looking, however, in a direction opposite to that from which the horseman was coming. To her surprise, he drew rein when opposite to her and addressed her:

“Excuse me, Madam, but am I right in supposing this to be the former residence of one Madam von Ketterer?”

Adelaide looked up. When she saw who the questioner was, she could not avoid taking a step backward, while an exclamation fell from her lips.

“Pardon me, Madam,” the gentleman went on, raising his *chapeau* and making a graceful bow, “for startling you. I should have preceded my inquiry by some indication of my presence.”

“You are very excusable, sir,” said Adelaide, with apparent composure, although she knew that her cheeks were flushed; “I was preoccupied with my own thoughts.”

“I trust they were pleasant ones,” said the gentleman. Then he added, gallantly, “Had I the making of the laws, I would have only those passed which render the people happy. But did you hear my question, or was your mind too busy with pleasant fancies? If so, I will repeat it.”

“Oh, no!” cried Adelaide; “I heard what you said. Madam von Ketterer lives here now.”

“I am greatly pleased to hear it. Many years ago I was often a guest in this house, and I retain pleasant memories of the uniform courtesy with which I was received here. I am on my way to Court in New Jersey, or I would stop this morning and present my compliments. I shall do so at a day not far distant. I thank you, Madam, for your civility.”

The gentleman replaced his *chapeau*, and his restive steed, which had chafed at the delay, sprang forward and went galloping down the road with his rider, who sat firmly and gracefully in the saddle.

Adelaide's thoughts were evidently again pre-occupied, for she stood for several moments in a state of abstraction. As she retraced her steps through the garden paths, she said to herself:

"He is just as handsome and noble as ever. But I must have changed greatly. He did not recognize me, and I am glad of it. He did not know me when he rescued me from the clutches of the British soldiers, so many, many years ago. I shall not be here when he calls, so I will say nothing about this meeting to my aunt."

When Adelaide entered the house, with the bouquet in her hand, her aunt exclaimed: "Why, child, your face is as red as a beet! You should not have stayed out in the hot sun so long. Now, if you will carry those flowers up to Mr. Billings, it will help me very much, for I have a great deal to do to-day."

"Tell me, instead, what I can do down here to help you," said Adelaide. "I am not acquainted with your boarder, you know. Perhaps, if he is so sick, he will not like to have a stranger come into his room."

"I think you are right," said her aunt. "Give me the flowers. While I am gone, you can begin washing those dishes."

Adelaide had intended to return home late that afternoon. She was used to the care of a

horse, and had come alone from her home in Jersey, which was about a three hours' ride. But early in the afternoon the sky became overcast and there was every indication of an approaching storm. When four o'clock, the hour of her intended departure, arrived, it was so dark that it seemed as if night had set in. An hour later, the storm burst upon them. The rain came down in torrents, while the vivid flashes of lightning and the constantly recurring peals of thunder showed that nature was in a most discordant mood.

James Billings being too weak to rise from his bed, Madam von Ketterer had given him a stout oaken staff with which to pound upon the floor in case he needed her assistance. He had used the staff many times, but there had been no response. Then it occurred to him, that, in a combat with nature, he was at a disadvantage, so he waited until there was a lull in the storm, when he redoubled his blows upon the wooden floor. In a few moments Madam von Ketterer entered the room.

"There is a terrible storm," she said, as she came in. "You are not afraid?"

"Oh, no," said Billings; "I have met and weathered too many storms in my life to be frightened by this. You know," said he, and a faint smile lighted up his face, "this is the only storm that never cleared up." He was silent for a moment, then he spoke again:

"I am loath to ask you to perform such a service at such a time, but the fact is, I am very weak and I feel as though I could not last much longer. I must see a lawyer before I die. Is there any way in which you can send for one?"

"Oh, yes," cried Madam von Ketterer; "my hired man has not gone home yet."

"Does he know where Col. Aaron Burr lives?" Billings inquired.

"Everybody in New York knows where he lives," was the reply. "I will send for him at once," and the old lady bustled out of the room.

The storm did not abate in violence during the next hour. The sick man lay motionless, with his eyes closed, unmindful of the warfare of the elements.

The hired man returned, and Madam von Ketterer went at once to the sick man's room. "I am sorry," said she, "but Colonel Burr is away from home and is not expected to return until late this evening. Owing to the storm, they say, he may not come back before to-morrow morning. Colonel Burr's *valet* told my hired man he had better go for Judge Van Ness, which he did, and the Judge is downstairs, ready to come up if you are willing to see him."

The sick man nodded, and a few moments later, Judge Van Ness was seated by his bedside. At the request of the Judge, writing materials were brought and placed upon the table, and in response to another request, a second candle was supplied.

The dying man and the lawyer were left alone. "I am very weak," said Billings, "but I have much to say which must be said. There is some brandy in that little cupboard near the mantel." After partaking of it, his spirits seemed revived. "Are you a friend of Col. Aaron Burr?" and the sick man looked intently into the face of the lawyer.

"I think I am not wrong in saying that I am one of his most intimate friends, and one in whom he reposes entire confidence," was the reply.

"I am very glad to hear it. I had hoped that he would come, for it is about him that I wish to speak; but if you are his friend and true to him, it may do as well. I have a confession to make — a death-bed confession, they call it. I wish you to write down what I say. When that is done, I will make oath as to its truth. After I am dead, show it to Colonel Burr, and I may rest quietly in my grave."

The confession was a long one, and during its recital Billings was obliged many times to have recourse to the stimulant which Judge Van Ness had found in the cupboard.

"I am known as James Billings," he began. "That is not the name that I bore when a child, nor during my early manhood, but it makes little difference what my name was then. I have been known as James Billings for so many years and by so many people that it will suffice.

"Many years ago I became acquainted with Colonel, now Gen. Alexander Hamilton. It was just before the outbreak of the Revolution, when he was a young man at college. I had my own reasons, and they were good ones, for becoming acquainted with him and for doing all that I could to secure his advancement; but when I entered his service, it did not occur to me that I should ever be called upon to perform such duties as have fallen to my lot.

"Colonel Hamilton and Major Burr were pay-

ing attentions at the same time to a young woman. I did not blame either of them, for she was beautiful and talented. She did not love Hamilton and rejected his suit. Hamilton thought that she loved Burr. He was of a jealous and revengeful disposition, and determined to have vengeance both upon his rival and the woman who had refused his love. Then it was that I became his tool, his minion, his servant, his hireling, to perform unworthy and despicable deeds. I began that way and I finished in that way only a short time ago. At Colonel Hamilton's suggestion, I circulated stories traducing the good name of this young woman, and coupled her name with that of Major Burr. It was easy to start the story, but it was impossible to stop it or to prevent its growth as it passed from one to another. The maiden, overcome with grief and shame, went mad, and died a maniac. The story, in some form or other, reached the ears of General Washington, the Commander-in-Chief, and from that moment he began to distrust Major Burr.

"Burr left Washington's staff and became an aide-de-camp to General Putnam. His adverse fate still followed him. Margaret Moncrieffe was an inmate of General Putnam's home. Here was found fresh material for scandal, and I was not slow in giving it circulation. I know that Major Burr wrote a letter to General Washington, informing him, that, in his opinion, Margaret Moncrieffe was a British spy and was holding secret communication with the enemy. But General Washington never replied to it because

it never reached him. I paid liberally for its destruction.

“Some time after, Major Burr wrote to Washington that he had discovered a weak point in the enemy’s line on Long Island, and that if they were attacked he felt sure that a victory could be gained. I am on my death-bed and I will keep back nothing. I became a traitor and took measures to have information conveyed to Lord Howe, which put him on the defensive. Hamilton prevailed upon Washington not to place Major Burr in charge of the expedition, arguing that he was too young to have so important a command. Lord Stirling made the attack, but was repulsed with great loss. This gave Hamilton a good opportunity to decry the military ability of Major Burr.

“At the battle of Monmouth, Colonel Burr had advanced gallantly at the head of his troops and was upon the point of crossing a small bridge and engaging the enemy hand-to-hand, when Hamilton prevailed upon Washington to order a retreat. But the order sent to Burr was not to retreat, but to STOP! You know the result of that order, and it is not necessary for me to dwell upon the events which followed.

“Colonel Burr’s appointment to the charge of the Westchester lines removed him beyond Hamilton’s direct influence, but the latter felt that in this command there was little glory to be gained.

“After the war, both Burr and Hamilton became lawyers and were once more rivals. Next, they both engaged in politics and again were

rivals — bitterer foes than they had ever been. Burr defeated Gen. Philip Schuyler, Hamilton's father-in-law and from that day Hamilton was full of implacable hatred for his adversary. He knew that he could not successfully meet his rival in an open contest, so he resorted to underhand methods in order to undermine him and prevent his further political advancement. He wrote confidential letters to both friends and foes, declaring Burr to be lacking in integrity and morality. He called him the Catiline of America, and endeavored to create in the minds of all a feeling that Aaron Burr was a conspirator whose aims were selfish and whose only desire was personal aggrandizement, at whatever cost to the liberties of his country. During Washington's administration, while Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury, Senator Burr was denied access to State papers which previously had been freely consulted. Then came those dark days for Hamilton, when, in order not to disclose his unlawful financial dealings with James Reynolds, he was forced to confess his criminal intimacy with the wife of his partner.

“ But Hamilton, like Burr, was not a man to be permanently cast down by temporary adversity. The prospect of a war with France brought him again to the front. As second to Washington in command, but virtually at the head of the army, he successfully opposed President Adams's desire to appoint Colonel Burr a brigadier-general, even, as years before, he had induced President Washington to refuse to appoint Burr ambassador to

France, when thrice requested to do so by votes of the Senate.

“Although Hamilton felt that Burr—even as the Greeks tell us that the goddess Nemesis cast down those who, in the opinion of Jupiter, had been too successful in life—should be dragged down from his high estate, despite all his efforts, he could not prevent his rival from being chosen Vice-President of the United States. With this contest you are, doubtless, as familiar as I am, and it will not be necessary for me to recount the part taken by Alexander Hamilton therein.

“But perhaps you do not know that since Burr’s elevation to the second place in the United States, a conspiracy has existed against him; that President Jefferson has formed an alliance with Clinton, who is to be the next Vice-President; that James Cheetham, the tool of Clinton, or of any one who will pay him for his services, has worked for years and is working still to prevent the further political success of Colonel Burr. He owes his defeat in the recent State election to the combined efforts of Jefferson, Clinton, Cheetham and Hamilton. Though not in personal accord, not of the same political belief, they have had a common purpose in view—the complete defeat of Colonel Burr’s political hopes for the future.” Billings stopped, apparently exhausted.

“But why have you done this?” was the question that came involuntarily from Judge Van Ness.

“My purpose has been to confess my actions, not my motives,” was the reply. “For the former,

I feel myself accountable to man, and that is the reason why I have made this confession. For the latter, I shall be called upon to account to God, and to Him alone."

"Is this all?" asked Judge Van Ness.

Billings nodded.

"It will be necessary to sign it in the presence of two witnesses," the Judge added.

"Will not Madam von Ketterer do for one?" asked Billings. "She has a hired man. Perhaps he will come as the second."

The Judge left the room, but returned soon, accompanied by Madam von Ketterer. "I am sorry, Mr. Billings," she began, "but my hired man has gone home. My niece, Mrs. Prentiss, was going home, but the storm prevented. She will come if you are willing."

The sick man looked up inquiringly. Judge Van Ness nodded, and Madam von Ketterer went in search of her niece.

When the document had been signed and duly witnessed, as Billings lay back upon the pillows, his eye caught sight of the face of the second witness. He beckoned to Madam von Ketterer, who approached him and bent down to hear what he might say.

"Who is she?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.

"My niece, Mrs. Daniel Prentiss," was the reply.

"Did she ever live in New York with you?" was the next inquiry.

"Why, yes," answered Madam von Ketterer. "She was here at the opening of the Revolution,

when this house used to be the resort of the generals and officers of the American army.

"What was her maiden name?" cried Billings, evidently in a state of great excitement.

"Why what is the matter?" exclaimed Madam von Ketterer. "Did you ever see her before? I don't believe that you ever came to my house while she was here."

"But her name?" cried Billings, almost fiercely, raising himself upon his elbow and gazing intently at Adelaide, who, engaged in conversation with Judge Van Ness, was not aware that she was the object of his scrutiny.

"Why, her name was Adelaide Clifton," said Madam von Ketterer, in an agitated tone, partaking, insensibly, of her questioner's excitement.

Billings now became unmindful of the presence of his landlady and uttered the name of the lawyer in a loud voice, which astonished his hearers. "Tell them to leave the room!" he cried; "I wish to speak to you alone."

Judge Van Ness escorted the ladies to the door. As he closed it behind them, he advanced quickly to the bedside of the dying man.

"Did you see her?" cried Billings. "Did you hear what her name was? What name did she sign on the paper?"

"Mrs. Daniel Prentiss," was the reply.

"Of course," said Billings; "she is alive and married, and wrote her husband's name; but before she was married, her name was Adelaide Clifton. Did she tell you that?"

"I did not ask her," said Judge Van Ness; "it was not necessary."

“Yes, it was!” cried Billings, “very important and very necessary! What will you say — what will you do, when I tell you — for it is God’s truth — the woman with whom Hamilton and Burr were both in love — the woman who rejected Hamilton, and whom Hamilton and I always supposed died a raving maniac — was named Adelaide Clifton and was the niece of Madam von Ketterer? Leave me now. I can die happy, now that I know she is living. The crime of causing her death has been the sin which has weighed heaviest upon my soul. Now that that is removed, I care but little. Take that paper to Colonel Burr. Show it to him as soon as you can. It is all the amend that I can make. Tell him that, personally, I bore him no ill-will, but for good reasons of my own I became the slave of Alexander Hamilton. Go! — go! I wish to be alone when I die.”

“But do you not wish to see General Hamilton before your last hour comes?” Judge Van Ness ventured to inquire.

Billings thought for a moment, then he said: “Yes, find him if you can, and send him to me at once. I cannot live long, but,” and he laughed sardonically, “I have some news to tell him. Oh, yes, have him come, by all means.”

After Judge Van Ness had left the room, Billings sat upright in bed. It seemed as though all his physical strength, for the time being, had been restored to him.

“Yes, I should like to see General Hamilton. I have much to tell him, but he shall never know that she still lives! He shall never know that Adelaide Clifton is not dead!”

CHAPTER XXXI

RICHARD OF DENMARK

SHORTLY after the departure of Judge Van Ness, the storm visibly abated; the showers of rain came down but intermittently, and the wind blew only in fitful gusts. But old Boreas had no intention of giving up the contest; he was only taking time for recuperation, and shortly after midnight the storm burst forth again with redoubled vigor.

The door of the sick man's room was opened and Gen. Alexander Hamilton entered. He had knocked twice upon the door which had been pointed out to him by Madam von Ketterer, but the noise of the elements had prevented his summons being heard. One of the candles had been removed from the table and the other had been so placed that its light would not fall upon the face of the invalid, which was, consequently, in shadow, and unrecognizable even at a short distance. General Hamilton removed his surtout and placed it, together with his cane and hat, upon a chair. Then he approached the bedside of the sick man.

"Good-evening, sir," he said. "A messenger came to my house with the intelligence, that a gentleman at the point of death imperatively needed my professional services. Although I had

a large company of guests at my house, detained over night by the severity of the storm, and although I should have much preferred the comfort and seclusion of my own library to a journey hither in my carriage, I felt it my duty as a lawyer to respond to a professional call, no matter what personal inconvenience it might cause."

"Give me that bottle of brandy on the table!" The words came from within the gloom, and at the sound of them, General Hamilton started. That voice seemed familiar! With the brandy bottle in one hand and the candle in the other, he approached the bedside. The sick man snatched the bottle from his hand and took a quick gulp. Then he put it under his pillow.

Hamilton had seen the face of the dying man. In sharp tones, he said: "Is it you, Billings, who has sent for me? How dared you drag me from my comfortable fireside on such a tempestuous night?"

"Is it too much to ask you to pay me one visit when I am on my death-bed? When I was in the prime of manhood — yes, even since I have become old and infirm — I have responded promptly to your beck and call. Is it asking too much to have you come once at my bidding?"

"Well, what is it?" asked Hamilton. "Do you wish to make your will?"

"My will?" Billings repeated the words sarcastically. "Did I not tell you the last time I had the extreme pleasure of calling upon you at your office, that through bad investments and the perfidy of a trusted friend, I had lost nearly all my

money? Did I not ask you then to redeem the many promises which you had made me in the past, that should I ever come to want, or need your assistance, you would gladly furnish it? But how have you repaid me for my lifelong services—for the lies which I have told—for the injuries which I have done to others; yes, for all the crimes, including murder, which I have committed in your interest and at your bidding?"

"Speak lower!" said Hamilton, gritting his teeth. "Do you wish everybody to hear your nonsensical ravings?"

"They may appear nonsensical to others," said Billings, "but not to you, for you know they are true. I repeat, how did you repay me for what I have done for you? You told me to leave your office and never to come into it again—that you had done with me—that you were through with me! Yes, those were the very words you used! That was the way in which you repaid me!"

The sick man was greatly exhausted by the intensity of his feelings and the vehement manner in which he had expressed them. He again had recourse to the fiery stimulant, and in a few moments it gave him sufficient strength to proceed with the conversation:

"No, I did not want to see you about making my will. I have little to leave. What money I had, I placed in my landlady's hands. It will take that and the sale of my effects to secure money enough to pay for my funeral expenses. I am sorry," and he laughed sardonically, "that I have not enough left to make you a bequest, to pay you for the kind services that you have rendered me."

At that moment the old clock on the stairway chimed, and then struck the hour of twelve.

"It is midnight," said Hamilton; "I am used to staying up to even a later hour, but my coachman, who is drenched with rain, is, no doubt, desirous of returning home to the Grange as soon as possible. May I inquire for what reason you have desired my presence here tonight?"

"You will not be sorry that you came," said Billings. "No doubt you have wondered why I should render you such service as I have, with only promises for pay, which promises have been proven to have no commercial value. I presume you have often thought that Billings was not my real name."

"Such men as you," replied Hamilton, "often bear a number of names during their lifetime. I have always regarded you as a man with a past. If you changed your name, it must have been from the fear of punishment and not from the hope of obtaining any reward thereby. You are probably guilty of some crime, and wished to conceal your identity. A lawyer often meets with instances of the kind."

"If you had known what my crime was," said Billings, "and had also known that by denouncing me, you could deliver me into the clutches of the law, you could have had a secure hold upon me and could have asked me—yes, commanded me to do your bidding; but have you not often wondered why I have carried out your every wish, when you had no such hold upon me and had no right to demand such service?"

Hamilton did not reply.

"I do not blame you for not answering my question," said Billings. "I have watched you since you were a boy, and all through your life you have been willing to accept the services of others if they would advance your personal interests. Why should you give any thought as to their motives when the service was freely offered and cost you nothing?"

Hamilton seemed to have heard but a portion of Billings's last speech, for when he concluded, he asked with a look of astonishment:

"You have watched me since I was a boy?"

"Yes," said Billings, "even before you left the Island of Nevis. I followed you to St. Croix, and then to the United States."

Hamilton started to his feet. "You lie!" he cried. "You never knew me — you never met me until after I was in the army! I well remember the first day that I saw you."

"No doubt you do," was Billings's reply. "I, also, well remember the first day I saw you. Sit down, General Hamilton, and listen to my little story. I know you will be greatly interested in it."

Once more the sick man had recourse to the stimulant upon which he depended for strength. "In the first place," he began, "my Christian name is not James, but Richard. What my surname is, you will discover before I have finished my story. Like yourself, I am foreign born. I am a native of the kingdom of Denmark, and my father was a wealthy man. My mother died when

I was quite young, and as I was the only child, at my father's death I inherited all his property. I drank, I gambled, and in many other ways disposed quickly of a large part of my fortune. Then I determined to reform, and in order to make that reform effectual, as I thought, I married a young and beautiful Frenchwoman.

"She wished me to leave Denmark and my old associates, and go with her to her native country. This I did, but I soon found that Frenchmen and Frenchwomen are as fond of a gay life as are the natives of Denmark, and I began again my life of dissipation. But this was not all. My nerves unstrung and my temper soured by continual debauches and by heavy losses at the gaming table, I vented my displeasure upon one whom I thought would bear it uncomplainingly — my wife. But the women of France have more spirit than the men. She was indignant, as she had a right to be, at my treatment of her, and as I continued it, she did something for which I never blamed her — she left my bed and board and fled from the country — I knew not where.

"For several years, I experienced a feeling of relief at her absence. Then I was seized with an uncontrollable impulse to search for her, find her, confess my faults, and promise to be a good husband in the future. By chance, I discovered the port from which she had sailed, and learned that she had gone to America. What little money I had, I took with me and secured passage upon a ship bound for that country. The vessel was captured by pirates, and with one exception, all of the

passengers and crew were made to walk the plank. That exception was myself. I wished to live, and I agreed to become one of the pirate crew if the captain would spare my life. I was still young and strong, and my prayer was granted. In a conflict with an armed merchantman, not long after, the pirate captain and his first mate were killed and it became necessary to choose another leader. Whatever I have to do, as you well know, I do with my whole heart and soul; and the powers of endurance and the bravery which I had shown during the fight with the merchantman had attracted the attention of the crew. I was chosen their captain, and for three years my ship became a scourge of the seas.

“Chancing to stop at one of the smaller of the West India Islands for water and supplies, I went ashore, for three years had passed since I had walked upon dry land. They say fortune favors the brave, but I think it is just as apt to favor the wicked. On that island I met — no, I saw, for we did not meet — the woman who had been my wife. I made inquiries and soon ascertained that she was married to a Scotch planter and had a son. Did I say married? Well, not legally married, for she had never been divorced from me. This illegitimate son of my wife bore the name of his father — the Scotch planter.”

Hamilton had listened to the first part of the sick man's story in an apathetic manner; but now he seemed greatly interested and fixed his keen gaze upon Billings — for as yet he knew him by no other name.

“I told my mate of the discovery I had made and that I must quit the ship and remain upon the island. He explained the matter to the crew and the affair was amicably arranged, I receiving my share of the profits. These I proceeded at once to invest in London, in the name of James Billings and it is from them that I have derived the means of subsistence since that time. I determined to remain upon the island, watch my wife, and wait for the time to come when I could wreak upon her the vengeance which I had determined she should suffer. But I was balked in this. She died before I could carry out my plans, and shortly after, the son left the island and went to St. Croix, where I followed him.”

At this juncture, Hamilton began to see the point of the story. In a fit of indignation he declared that Billings's story was all an invention and had no foundation in fact.

“Not at all,” said Billings. “I followed him to the United States and watched his career. I determined that I would accomplish my revenge in another way. I would help him in every effort to secure the object of his ambition, provided that he would, some day, help me. I was a man with a past, and with a very discreditable one. I wished to become once more an honorable man and to die honored and respected. I did all that he wished me to do to further his ambition, and when he had reached the pinnacle of fame, I expected that he would reward me for my faithful service. But no — he turned upon me and refused to have anything more to do with me.”

"Who are you?" cried Hamilton, his voice choked with passion.

"I am known to you," said the man, "as James Billings. My right name is Richard Lavine. I was the lawful husband of Rachel Faucette, who was your mother. Need I say more?"

"No!" cried Hamilton; "you have said too much already! The messenger told me that you could not live much longer, and I shall remain with you until the end comes. The story which you have told me must never be known by any one else."

"Oh, I have been discreet," said Lavine. "I do not wish to have the relationship which exists between us known to the world. There is nothing creditable in it to either you or me. I have more I could tell you, but I will leave you to find it out for yourself. But you are too late to prevent the story of our intimacy, from the opening of the Revolution to the present time, from becoming known. I knew that my death was near, and I decided to make my peace with the world and with God; so I sent for Col. Aaron Burr to take down my death-bed confession."

"And does he know?" cried Hamilton, grasping the man by his shoulders and lifting him to a sitting posture and looking fiercely into his face.

It was with a feeble voice that the man replied: "No. He was away from home, but his friend, Judge Van Ness, came, and he has my statement, signed by me and witnessed by two reliable witnesses. One of the witnesses you know, but you shall never know whom the other one was. But you would give your life to know!"

"Tell me!" cried Hamilton, his rage overmastering whatever sense of decency or kindness he may have possessed; "tell me who it is!"

But it was too late. The dying man had tried to lift the bottle of brandy to his lips, but it had fallen from his palsied fingers and the liquor drenched the bed-clothing and filled the room with its fumes. Richard of Denmark was dead!

Hamilton stood transfixed. The situation was a novel one to him. Throughout his life he had secretly traduced the characters and impugned the motives of his military, legal, and political opponents. Here before him lay a man who in the last throes of life had betrayed him by divulging those secrets which he had supposed would never be known to any but himself and his minions. This was an exigency which must be met — but how?

He decided quickly that the quiet and seclusion of his comfortable library at the Grange would be a more suitable place in which to consider the matter, than where he was, so he donned his surtout and turned to leave the room.

As he placed his hand upon the latch of the door, the thought came to him that he would make sure that the man was dead. He approached the bed. The storm had abated but little. A heavy gust of wind struck the house. Some of it found its way into the room through the loosely-fitting window-sash and struck the candle flame, causing an unusual glare to fall upon the face of the Dane. Hamilton started back. What a horrible sight! There could be

no doubt of his death. His lower jaw had fallen; his eyes were wide open and looked at Hamilton with a glassy stare.

Hamilton went quickly to the door and again placed his finger upon the latch. No! He could not leave the room with those eyes still fixed upon him. He knew they were the eyes of a dead man, but they affected him as they had never done when the man was alive. Going to the table, he extinguished the candle. He looked towards the bed, but the eyes still glared at him. He ran from the room and slammed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE DEAD ALIVE

HAMILTON descended the stairs and found Madam von Ketterer in the sitting-room. A single candle, burning upon the great mahogany table, sent a faint gleam of light through the large apartment.

"Mr. Billings is dead," said he, as he entered the room.

Madam von Ketterer arose. "I have had many deaths in my family," she said, "and I know how to render those services which precede the final arrangements for his burial. I will go at once."

"Pardon me," said General Hamilton, "but Mr. Billings told me before his death, he made his will."

"I do not know what the document was," said Madam von Ketterer. "I sent my hired man for Col. Aaron Burr, but as he was not at home, he went, at the suggestion of Colonel Burr's *valet*, to the residence of Judge Van Ness, who came here and made out a document, which was witnessed by my niece and myself."

"Ah!" cried Hamilton, "by your niece and yourself?" Then he thought how easily he had found out what Billings seemed so anxious to keep from him — the name of the second witness

to the document. "As your niece witnessed the document, I presume she is living with you, or resides not far from here."

"Oh," said Madam von Ketterer, "she doesn't live with me. She lives in New Jersey, but she came to see me to-day and was prevented from going home on account of the severe storm. She has gone to her room for a few moments. Would you like to see her?"

"As a friend of Mr. Billings, I should wish," said General Hamilton, "to know that his will was properly made out and attested by competent witnesses. Your evident willingness to allow me to see your niece inspires me to proffer a request that I may meet her."

While Madam von Ketterer was absent from the room, General Hamilton laughed to himself: "Billings must have been out of his head when he made that statement. Why should I be willing to give my life, as he declared I would be, to learn the name of Madam von Ketterer's niece, who is probably the wife of some New Jersey farmer? I have often heard that men lose their heads—that their minds wander just before death. Probably, after all, the majority of what Billings told me is only a fabrication, and the document signed by him was only his will."

Madam von Ketterer entered the room accompanied by her niece, Mrs. Prentiss, whom she introduced.

"I am delighted to meet Mrs. Prentiss, and am sorry that unkind fate has not allowed me that pleasure before."

Mrs. Prentiss looked at the speaker fixedly. Then she said in a calm, even tone of voice: "I think General Hamilton's memory is at fault. Surely you have not forgotten that evening you passed with me in the garden when I was Adelaide Clifton?"

Had the floor sunk beneath his feet? Had a bolt of lightning struck the house? Why was it that his knees gave way beneath him — that it seemed as though he must fall prone upon the floor? Then to his mind the whole story came. Billings had told the truth. Van Ness knew all and tomorrow his old enemy, Aaron Burr, would know it, too! The woman who stood before him probably knew it also! He was transfixed, he could not utter a word. Grasping his hat and cane, without saying a word of farewell or vouchsafing any explanation of his strange conduct, he left the house.

As he entered his carriage, which stood before the door, he cried, harshly: "Drive at once to the Grange and be quick about it, too!" The coachman, nothing loath, whipped up his horses and started northward. The drive was a long and tedious one, and the lonely occupant of the carriage had plenty of time for thought and reflection.

There could be no doubt of it. Billings — he still thought of him as Billings, for he could not bring himself so quickly to regard him as the lawful husband of his mother — had told the truth. They were both dead now and might become reunited. He had loved his mother devotedly. Would the husband tell the wife how her son had requited him for a lifetime of service? He had

not done for this man what he had promised to do. When he made the promises, he had intended to fulfil them; but circumstances had changed. He had lost his power in political life and his expenditures were far beyond his income. Why had not the man asked for his pay sooner? He could have given him a government office or have placed him in a position where he might have made money. No, the man had lost his opportunity, and he had lost his. The man had chosen his own way of cancelling the debt. He had exacted not only the principal, but an exorbitant interest. There was one consolation, however. The world would never know that James Billings was, in reality, Richard Lavine, and the lawful husband of his mother.

But the world would soon know what would injure him more. Billings had made a death-bed confession. In it he had told of his doings since he had become his pliant tool, and the publication of the confession would be fatal to his hopes for the future. Judge Van Ness was Aaron Burr's most intimate friend. He had taken down the confession, and every word that it contained was, undoubtedly, fresh in his mind. Even if he did not show the document to Burr, he would be sure to tell him what it contained.

Then his thoughts took a new channel. What would Burr do when he learned the truth — when he knew that from the day of their earliest acquaintance he had been his secret enemy and had used every means within his power to defeat his plans and frustrate his ambition? Would he

pass over the affair lightly, as he had done upon one occasion before, accepting an apology and a promise to refrain from such a course in the future as ample reparation?

No! He could not do this. If he did, it would be because he looked upon him with contempt, and he would not bear that. No! Burr would challenge him, and he would be obliged to accept. How could he refuse? During the war he had acted as a second in a duel, and he himself had challenged James Munroe. Not only that, but his eldest son, Philip, had fallen a victim to the code on the ground at Weehawken. No! He felt sure that Burr would challenge him, but upon what ground?

When the cartel came, he might find some loophole for escape. He would handle the challenge as he would the brief of an opposing counsel. He would interpose a demurrer, and file objections; perhaps he would deny the allegation, trusting to the honor of his opponent not to make the confession public. Yes! he would avail himself of every possible pretext before he would imperil his life upon the so-called field of honor.

But if all his plans failed and he was forced to meet Burr, he felt that in such an event he was a doomed man. How could he look upon the face of the man whom he had traduced and vilified for so many years, and then have sufficient nerve to aim his weapon to end that life? No! If forced to fight, he would not fire upon his opponent. But what reason could he give for not doing so?

Ah! he had struck the solution of the problem at last. He no longer believed in the code duello. What more natural than for him to declare, that having lost his son through the barbarous practice, he now realized the enormity of it, and if forced to fight, in deference to public opinion, he would not die with the blood of his opponent upon his hands. Ah! that was a capital idea. He would have plenty of time to put it into the most effective shape before the fatal day came.

"If I die, it will be as a martyr, and not as a murderer." He spoke these words aloud. He knew that no one could hear, for the rain pattered loudly upon the top of the carriage, while the angry winds howled around it.

The carriage stopped. An instant later, the door was opened, and the coachman exclaimed: "We're home at last, General, and glad I am of it."

General Alexander Hamilton, the master of the lordly mansion which he had named "The Grange," in honor of his noble ancestors—those of Scotland, not those of Denmark—passed through the doorway, through which, in turn, in less than a month, his body was to be carried to its last resting-place beneath the shadow of Old Trinity.

The student of history knows how this came to pass. He knows that Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, the champion of the House of York, whose badge of honor was the White Rose, placed Edward IV. upon the throne of England. He knows what requital was given that champion

for his years of toil and his unexampled acts of bravery.

He knows that upon the field of Weehawken, the man who been known as Aaron Burr—who had been colonel, legislator, senator, and vice-president—whose favor had been courted by men, and whose face, and form, and courtly manners had been admired and loved by women—he knows that this man met there his political and social death. It was this man who had placed Thomas Jefferson not upon a throne, but upon a still higher eminence—in the office of President of the United States of America.

The student of history does not know, but he will learn, when the real facts of the case are presented to him, as they will be, that the political and social repudiation of Aaron Burr, which was, in reality, a living death, was the result of a conspiracy conceived in the most malignant spirit and carried out in the most infamous manner. The fate of the Warwick of England—death on the battlefield—was, indeed, a happy one, compared with the unmerited political and social ostracism, which became the lot of Aaron Burr, the Warwick of America.

THE END.

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