

somewhere near the Harlem, within a week or ten days. Within that time, I shall send a brigade to make such demonstrations as will add to that conviction. Meanwhile, if you discover that General Clinton has a hint of my real purpose, spare neither life nor energy to let the news be brought to me upon the instant. It is a perilous undertaking that I ask of you, but be comforted with the knowledge that if you succeed in doing these things it will probably be the last time that you will be called upon to risk your life and to face an ignominious death. If my purposes succeed now, Captain Lathrop, I believe the war for the independence of these people will end with a victory for us."

Here Washington took both of Edmund's hands in his and he said to him, for Edmund had replied to him by a single word of assent, "Go, then, Captain Lathrop, at once. If you live you may rejoice that you have contributed in no small measure to our success if we gain it. If you die, be reminded of that noble youth who said as he mounted the gallows, 'I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country.'"

Washington here gave him a pass and offered him money, but Edmund declined to receive any gold. Then for a moment there was further instruction in regard to minor details, and then the commander-in-chief with tender affection bade the young soldier adieu.

### III.

Three weeks later, Captain Lathrop, then in the disguise of a farmer's helper, was approached by a friend who knew him well and who knew his hiding-places in the woods. The man had brought him food and drink, and he said to Edmund, "The skirmishers of Washington are coming from above, and there is confusion in the outposts of Clinton's army on that account."

To this Edmund made no reply, but he said instead, "And of Ruth? What have you learned of her? Is Colonel Matthews and are the aides still there?"

The farmer hesitated. He seemed to dread to make reply. He averted his face, and Edmund, speaking with some passion, said to him, "Tell me, Jonathan, tell me all that you have heard."

"They do say, Captain, that the Colonel's men have got track of you and that you will be captured soon."

"I do not care for that," and Edmund spoke with passion. "Tell me these things, does Colonel Matthews still believe that Washington is coming this way?"

"He does. He sends daily to General Clinton a message that all is safe, and that Washington is prepared to move his army in that direction."

"Why does not Colonel Matthews go himself to Clinton?"

"I do not like to tell you, Captain."

"You must; that is what I am bound to know, for if I do not learn it otherwise, I shall go to the house myself that I may discover."

"No, no; do not do that, Captain, they will capture you and hang you if you do. I will tell you what they say. They say Colonel Matthews has become bewitched by the beauty of Ruth, and that he is paying earnest court to her."

For a moment Edmund did not speak, but at last, his lips trembling and very white, he said: "And Ruth? How does she receive such courtship?"

"Ah, Captain, that is what I do not want to say."

"You must tell me."

"Well, I myself saw Ruth, and she seemed to be most pleased with the attentions, and her smile was a joyous one, and her eyes were merry, and she returned some remark of gallantry which he made to her in kind."

At this moment there came to this secret haunt a youth, a messenger, whose face was so smeared with dirt and dust that his countenance was scarcely recognisable, so that Edmund did not know him until he spoke.

"What, Thomas, is it you?" he said. "Where have you come from?"

"I was told to give you this," the young man said, and he handed to Edmund a bit of paper, and when Edmund read it he was rejoiced. It was a message from Washington bidding him return and join his regiment in the Virginias.

The lad told his story briefly. He said that Washington, by means of deceit which kept Clinton in darkness of Washington's plan, had escaped with his army across the Hudson, across New Jersey, and was about to embark, when the lad left the army, on the Chesapeake for Yorktown. The commander had made his escape, he had befooled Clinton.

Edmund at once removed his disguise. He said to his friend, Jonathan, that all danger was now averted, and that his mission was ended. He had done his part in enabling Washington thus to escape the watchful eye of Clinton with his army, and he declared it to be his purpose to go at once to Ruth.

So it happened that just as the sun was setting on that afternoon, Edward entered the little garden by way of the apple orchard that stood to the east of Ruth's home.

As he passed through the orchard he heard a voice which caused him to stop, and a moment later Ruth and Colonel Matthews came along the path which skirted the orchard. They did not see him, though he made no effort to conceal himself.

Then he heard the British officer pouring words of love and affection in the ear of his affianced, and it seemed for the moment as though he had murder in his heart. What he would have done who can tell, but he heard the voice of Ruth speaking sadly and plaintively, and she said:

"Ah Colonel Matthews, did you not see that it was all pleasantry? You say I had no right thus to deceive you, but why did you come here seeking to capture and kill my betrothed? You say that all is fair in love and war, and if that be true, then it was fair for me to be coquettish with you, for my betrothed told me, on the day he left me to join the army, that if I would only keep you here for many days, 'twould be a blessing to Washington and to our army, and it was because he told me that that I have played the coquettish part with you."

The British Colonel seemed for an instant to be beside himself with rage, and he spoke low, but violently, so that the girl became most greatly frightened, and in her distress, not knowing what she said, she called aloud saying, Edmund, Edmund, help me!" and behold, even as she called, there stood her betrothed before her.

He took her in his arms and then, turning to Matthews, said: "It is true what this dear woman has said."

"Are you the spy?" the Colonel said.

"I am an officer of the Continental army."

"You are a spy, for whom we have long looked, and I will call my men, and you shall dangle at the gallows to-morrow." Then, pausing for a moment, he said: "If this maiden will renounce you and will promise me her hand, then I will turn my back so that you may escape."

Edmund turned smilingly to Ruth, and said to her, "Ruth, it shall be as you say; this man can send me to the gallows to-morrow. Will you renounce me for him, and thus save me from that ignominy? For an instant she did not speak, and then she said, her face very white, "If I renounced him I should die, and if you hanged him I should die, therefore how can I renounce him, and what would you gain if you hanged him?"

The Colonel looked with amazement upon these two and then a moment later he spoke and his voice was so choked with emotion that he could hardly utter the words: "By heaven! Was there ever such affection as this? By my love for you, Ruth, I recall my ugly words. No act of mine shall imperil your lover. How better can I show my own affection for you?"

When he said these words, Edmund, releasing Ruth, went to him and took his hand, and he then said. "Colonel Matthews, for the service which you have now done me, I will do you another. Had you captured me, I could have exposed you to your general. I could have shown him that by your dalliance here, Washington has been enabled to escape with his army and that while you seemed to be upon duty, you were really imperiling your own army, because you were beguiled by this fair woman. But now I will say no word excepting this. General Washington has escaped you; his army is now upon the Chesapeake and will be in a day or two at Yorktown. You may take this message to Clinton, so that it will appear to him that you have been faithful to your duty and have gleaned this information in your own way."

The officer seemed like one stunned. "Washington escaped! Will be at Yorktown! 'Tis incredible."

"But 'tis true," said Edmund.

Then the officer took Ruth by the hand, but without saying one word he embraced her gently, and then departed, and, calling his aides and escort to him, in a moment their horses were carrying them to New York with this faithful message which Edmund had given him.

Two days later General Clinton had set sail from New York for the Chesapeake on his fruitless errand, for the capture of Cornwallis had already been accomplished.

That evening, after Ruth had told Edmund all those things which she desired to say to him, she said: "Poor Martha! My sister loved this colonel and he did not know it. Why could he not have wooed her instead of me, for he is a man of gentle heart and high honour." But it so happened when the war was over that Colonel Matthews, returned to New York, made himself the discovery of which Ruth had spoken, so that one day Captain Lathrop and Colonel Matthews became of kin through marriage, for Martha was wooed and won by this officer.



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