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I clasped the old man's hand, understanding for the first time what a friend he was.—Page 93.

With the Swamp Fox.

WITH THE SWAMP FOX

A Story of General Marion's
Young Spies.

By JAMES OTIS.



With Six Page Illustrations by J. Watson Davis.

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WITH THE SWAMP FOX.

BY JAMES OTIS.

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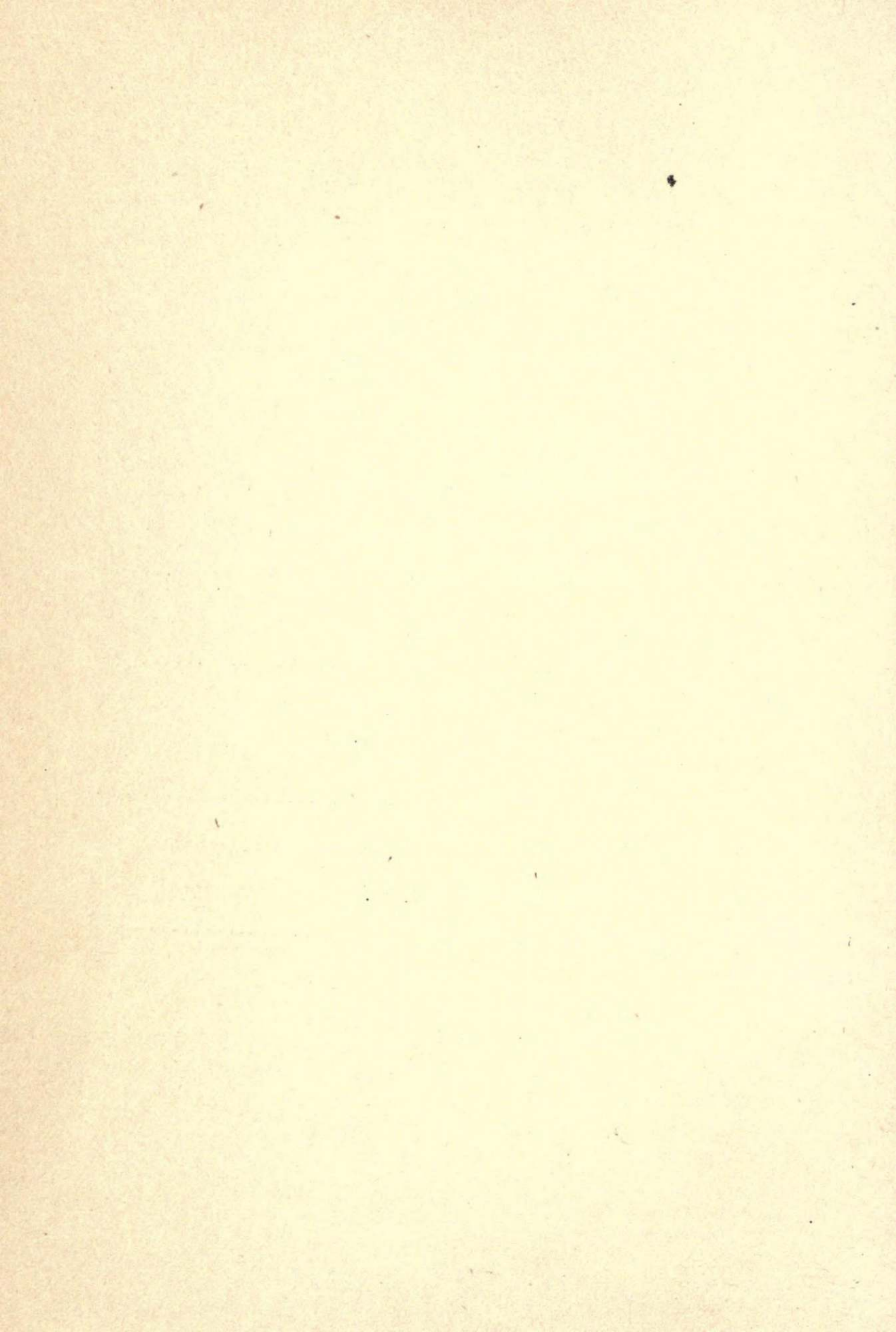
“Thank God I can lay my hand on my heart and say that, since I came to man’s estate, I have never intentionally done wrong to any.”

(General Francis Marion’s last words, spoken February 27th, 1795.)

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WITH THE SWAMP FOX.

CHAPTER I.

MY UNCLE, THE MAJOR.

HE who sets himself down to write of his own deeds in order that future generations may know exactly what part he bore in freeing the colonies from the burdens put upon them by a wicked king, must have some other excuse, or reason, than that of self-glorification.

Some such idea as set down above has been in my mind from the moment Percy Sumter—meaning my brother—urged that I make a record of what we did while serving under General Francis Marion, that ardent patriot and true soldier, who was

willing to make of himself a cripple rather than indulge in strong drink.

I question if there be in the Carolinas any one who does not know full well the story of that night in Charleston, when, the door being locked upon him in order that he might be forced to drink, General Marion—then only a colonel—leaped from the window, thereby dislocating his ankle, rather than indulge in a carousal which to him was unseemly and ungentlemanly.

This is but a lame beginning to what it is intended I shall tell regarding those days when we two lads, Percy and myself, did, as it has pleased many to say, the work of men in the struggle against foreign rule; yet however crude it may appear to those better versed in the use of the pen, it is the best I can do. My brother and myself went into General Marion's camp before our fourteenth birthday, and since that time have studied the art of warfare instead of letters, which fact is due to the troublous times rather than our own in-

clination, for my desire ever was ito improve my mind until I should be at least on equal terms with those lads who were more favored as to country.

First let me set down that of which we two—meaning Percy and myself—can honestly claim without fear of being called boastful.

Our mother was sister to those noble gentlemen, John, William, Gavin, James and Robert James, who one and all devoted their fortunes and their lives to the cause of the independence of the Carolinas. She married a Sumter, who died while yet we twins were in the cradle, and, therefore, we were come to look upon ourselves as true members of the James family, rather than Sumters, priding ourselves upon that which every true Carolinian is ready to declare, that “he who rightfully bears the name of James is always ready for the foe, the first in attack and the last in retreat.”

I am coming to the beginning of my story in a halting, and what may seem a

boastful, fashion, yet to my mind there is no other way of telling plainly what Percy and I were so fortunate as to accomplish under General Marion, than that of explaining why it was we two lads, less than fourteen years of age, should have been given such opportunities.

Now I will write particularly of my uncle, the major, in order that it may be further understood how we lads came to be known as scouts in the service of the "Swamp Fox," and while so doing much which is already well-known must be repeated.

When the city of Charleston was captured by the British, thousands of Carolinians who were true to the cause of independence voluntarily made of themselves exiles, despairing of being able to wrest their native colonies from the hands of the king, and willing to assist those in the north whose possibilities seemed bright.

To the men who were left at home, the proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton, offering

pardon to the inhabitants and a reinstatement of all their rights, seemed most honest.

When, however, Sir Henry's second decree was issued early in August, in the year 1780, declaring that we who accepted "pardon" must take up arms against those of the northern colonies who were yet holding their own against oppression, the condition of affairs seemed suddenly to have changed, and the gentlemen of the Carolinas asked themselves how these two proclamations could bear relationship.

Such question could only be answered by those high in authority under the king, and that the matter might be made plain, the people of Williamsburg, in the colony of South Carolina, chose my uncle, Major John James, to represent them in asking for an explanation.

The nearest post was at Georgetown, and the commandant one Captain Ardesoif.

To this officer my uncle presented himself with the question as to what might be

meant by the demand that the people of South Carolina "submit themselves to the king," and if, after having done so to the satisfaction of his majesty, they would be allowed to remain at their homes.

The British captain was one who looked upon the colonists generally as slaves who should be whipped into subjection, rather than men who were able and willing to defend their lives, and taking such view of the Carolinians, he made answer much in this fashion :

"His majesty offers you a free pardon, of which you are undeserving, for you all ought to be hanged ; but it is only on condition that you take up arms in his cause."

Had this redcoated captain known my uncle better, he might have selected his words with greater wisdom ; but, unacquainted with our family, he could have made no greater mistake, and proud am I to set down that which I know to be my uncle's answer :

“Sir, the people whom I am come to represent will scarcely submit to such condition.”

Then it was that Captain Ardesoif flew into a passion, giving no heed to the possibility that it might be dangerous to allow his tongue free rein.

“Represent !” he cried in a fury. “You insolent rebel, if you dare speak in such language I will have you hung up at the yard-arm,” and the redcoated captain pointed to his ship, which lay in the harbor.

I had never set myself down as a member of the James family if such words had been allowed to pass unnoticed, but those who know my uncle could have told the captain that he was most unwise in attempting to *force* us into any agreement.

The king’s officer was armed, and my uncle, clad in a garb such as is worn by us of Williamsburg, carried no weapons. This fact, however, had no weight with Major James.

Seizing the chair upon which he sat he

rushed upon the insolent Britisher, striking him senseless with a single blow, and then making his escape at once, for the king's soldiers were there in force, he mounted his horse and fled from the town.

All possibility that we of Williamsburg would "submit" had vanished, and within four and twenty hours came the enrolment of that body of true gentlemen and noble soldiers who were afterward known, and the memory of whom will live so long as the history of these colonies are told, as "Marion's Brigade."

It was the major, as a matter of course, who took command of these volunteers, and they were divided into four companies, each under a captain.

The first was led by William M'Cottry; Henry Mouzon had command of the second. John of the Lake—another branch of the James family, and an uncle to the major—was captain of the third, while John McCauley stood at the head of the fourth division.

These gentlemen, who had come together within less than four and twenty hours after my uncle's interview with the representative of his majesty at Georgetown were all residents of the district of Williamsburg, and were rendezvoused on the banks of Lynch's Creek nearby where it joins the Great Pedee River within less than two miles of my mother's home.

All this is set down by way of explanation, so that whosoever in the days to come shall read what I am so lamely doing, may understand how it chanced that we two lads played so important a part—for circumstances put it in our way to do good work--in the struggle which finally freed the Carolinas, as well as the other colonies of America, from the burdens which the king put upon them.

Percy and I had seen somewhat of warfare, or at least we believed we had, and watched keenly the movements of this brigade which my uncle commanded, expecting that such deeds of valor would be per-

formed by him and his soldiers as must give new impetus to the Cause throughout all the colonies.

Then, to our great surprise, we learned that General Marion was appointed chief over the forces raised in the Williamsburg district, and our hearts were filled with disappointment because it appeared to us that thereby had Major James lost the opportunity to show himself the valiant and skillful officer we believed him to be.

As a matter of course we had heard much regarding this soldier who leaped out of a window at the expense of breaking his bones, rather than join a party of gentlemen in their drinking, and were burning with curiosity, which as I have said, was mixed with deep disappointment, to know what kind of an appearance he might present.

The men of the command were by no means as captious regarding him as we two nephews of the man whom we believed to be the rightful commander.

Those Carolinians who took part in the defense of Charleston knew him to be a brave colonel, and expected much of him as a general ; but we lads were more than disappointed in the appearance of the soldier who had already made for himself a worthy name.

We saw a small, swarthy gentleman, walking with a decided limp, wearing a round-bodied, crimson jacket, and, perched upon his head was a leathern cap ornamented with a silver crescent on which were inscribed the words "liberty or death."

While we were not disposed to compare the king's soldiers with our own brave men to the disparagement of the latter, we had seen officers from many countries, and had rather more than a vague idea of what a uniform should be. Therefore this grotesque costume—for I can call it by no other name—impressed us unfavorably, although in a very few days we came to learn better than ever before that some-

thing more than clothes are needed to make the man.

When General Marion arrived at Lynch's Creek on the 12th of August, the men of Williamsburg had a military organization numbering, perhaps, four hundred, and not a man that could boast of a complete equipment.

Our Carolinians were armed with whatsoever weapons they owned, some carrying shot-guns and others muskets, while M'Cottry's company were provided with small-bore rifles. Each man had, perhaps, his horn filled with powder; but no more than that, and, as I have heard my uncle say time and time again, when the brigade first went into camp there was not of ammunition sufficient to sustain an engagement lasting half an hour.

The variety of missiles was as great as that of weapons. A few had muskets or rifle balls which they themselves had molded; others carried buck-shot, and some were provided only with bird-shot.

As for swords, bayonets and pikes, we had none, and the first order which General Marion issued after arriving at Lynch's Creek, caused me to have a higher opinion of him than I had at first believed would be possible.

Word was given that the force disperse in squads of from five to a dozen men, and set about sacking the saw mills in the immediate vicinity. Nothing was to be taken away from them save the saws, and these it was proposed should be beaten by the blacksmiths of the district into sabres.

Now in such work as this two lads like Percy and myself could do as much as men, and, without asking the privilege of volunteering, we set out, forming an "independent command of two," as Percy put it, bound for a certain mill owned by one Pingree, who had announced again and again that a Carolinian who would set himself in defiance against the king deserved nothing better than hanging.

It was no brave adventure which we started upon, and yet it led to our being brought into direct, and I might almost say close, contact with General Marion himself.

There was little need that we two lads should ask permission from our mother to join in the work of saw gathering, for the major was at the head of the family in good truth, and whatsoever he might do, was, in the opinion of even the most distant relatives, worthy of being copied.

It was only necessary Percy and I should announce that we counted on aiding the major so far as might be possible, and our mother at once saw that we were provided with such amount of provisions as would serve to keep hunger at bay during at least two days.

Perhaps my uncle might have objected to the plan had he been informed of it; but such information we were not minded to give lest the venture should be a failure, and we become a butt for his mirth.

Therefore it was we set out secretly, so

to speak, armed with the rifles which during no less than half a dozen years had served us in all the turkey-hunts and deer-stalking parties we were allowed to join.

Because this venture of ours was not important, save in what it led up to, there is no reason why I should use many words in the telling of it. Suffice it to say that after a tramp of ten miles or more, when we had crossed the Pedee River at Port's Ferry and were at Pingree's Mills, we learned, greatly to our surprise and considerably to our fear, that we should not be allowed to dismantle the building.

There we were met by a lad of our acquaintance whose home was in Kingstree. Samuel Lee was the name of this fellow, with whom we had had little intercourse because of his associating much with the king's soldiers; there had never been any bad blood between us, but we held aloof from him, and now I was less inclined than ever to give him my confidence.

He was curious to know what brought us

so far from home, and on our part we wondered what had led him out of the district.

Neither Percy nor I had any particular reason to fear Sam Lee; yet instinctively we closed our mouths on his approach, which was at the very moment when we were about to wrench the saws from the fastenings, and awaited his speech.

“What are you two hunting?” he asked with an unwarranted assumption of familiarity which Percy at once resented by closing his mouth closely, while I, little dreaming what information it was possible for him to give, replied in a tone intended to repel his advances :

“Any game which comes our way is not unwelcome.”

“Are you expecting to find fur or feather in Pingree’s Mill?”

I was tempted to reply roughly; but without knowing why it should be done, I put a curb upon my tongue and spoke him fairly, even against my inclination.

“When one has traveled far under such

a blazing sun as shines to-day, any shelter from the heat is grateful."

"And may at the same time be dangerous for some lads," he said in a tone which caused me to believe it was within his power to give some information of value to us.

"Why should it be dangerous for some, and not for others?" I asked.

"Because all who live in the Williamsburg district do not boast of their relationship to the James family, great though it may be."

Now was I certain he had it in his mind to do us a mischief, and was capable of carrying it out, else the cowardly lad who called himself a Loyalist would never have spoken so boldly.

There was a similar thought in Percy's mind, as I understood from the meaning look he gave me, and then I was resolved to know all Sam Lee could tell.

By way of provoking him to further speech I said boastingly :

“If you know of another family hereabout who have greater reason to be proud of its members, than ours, I would like much to hear the name.”

“Those who are wrapped up in their own conceit fail oftentimes of seeing the good which is in others, and I have heard it said that not one of the James tribe would admit that ever the king was higher in position than he.”

“You might have heard it said with equal truth that not a James, or a true Carolinian would admit that such a king as now claims the right to rule over us, was even our equal.” Percy replied hotly, and this seditious remark had the effect which I was hoping to bring about.

It stirred Sam Lee to anger, and he cried menacingly, but taking good care meanwhile to move off at a safe distance.

“Before many days you will learn that the James family cannot even take care of themselves!”

“But who shall teach us that lesson?” Percy asked with a sneer.

“No less a man than Major Gainey himself.”

“And how can he, who is now in Charleston, teach us so odd and sudden a lesson?”

“The major is at Britton’s Neck!” Sam cried triumphantly. “In command of a body of Loyalists so large that the people of Williamsburg will soon be on their knees begging protection from the king’s troops.”

“He will need have more Tories at his back to do that, than have ever been found in the Carolinas,” Percy cried, now almost boiling with rage.

“It may be that you Sumter lads, who hang to the skirts of Major James because of the great deeds he claims to be able to perform, have yet much to learn regarding the Loyalists of the Carolinas! What say you to two thousand well armed-and well-drilled men?”

“Two thousand?” Percy repeated with a laugh of scorn. “You know full well, Sam Lee, that such a number of Tories cannot be gathered in these colonies.”

“There is at this moment, ready to march upon your wonderful General Marion, near to that number of men, and before a week has passed every James around Williamsburg will be in custody of the king’s forces.”

“If all you say be true, and I doubt seven-eighths of it, why are you so far afield from those of your kidney? After all that has taken place in this colony, a Tory would do well to have a care over his steps lest he blunder into evil,” and now it was that I began to lose control over my temper.

“It is you who are blundering, Bob Sumter, for I have but to raise my voice and an hundred soldiers will answer me.”

Percy laughed derisively; but I am willing to confess that there was something very like timorousness in my heart as the Tory lad spoke, for I knew full well he had

not dared say so much unless friends were close at hand.

Now I felt positive there were no such number of Tories under Major Gainey as Sam Lee had said, yet was I equally certain there must be a strong gathering in the neighborhood, and he would have been a dull lad indeed who could not realize how important it was that my uncle, the major, have immediate information regarding the assembly.

Once this fact had gained lodgment in my mind I was burning with anxiety to retrace my steps.

There was no longer any desire in us to bring back a goodly store of saws that our neighbors might praise us for having been industrious.

There remained only the question of leaving Sam Lee as quickly as might be, without arousing his suspicions as to where we were going.

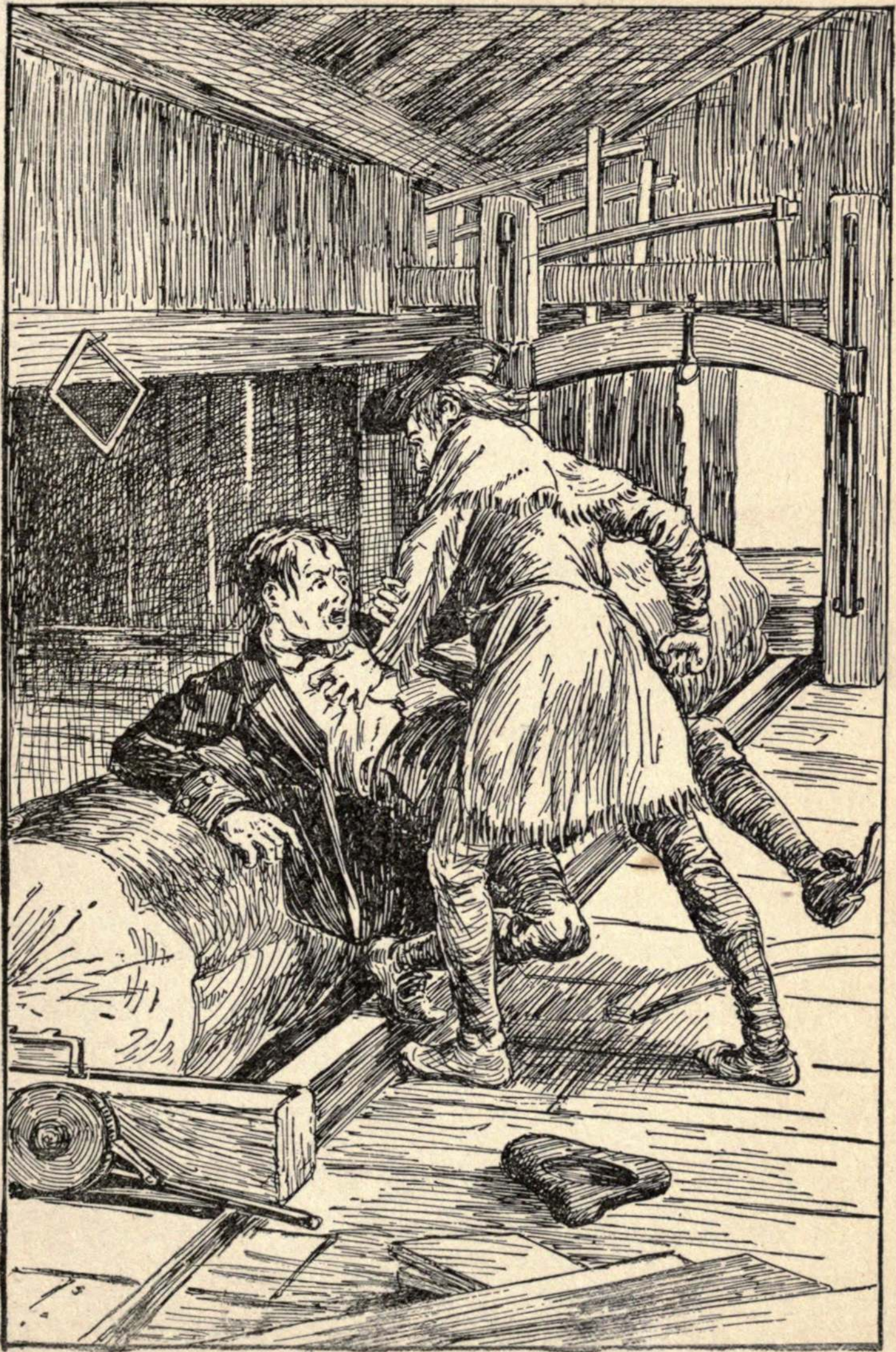
It was not a simple matter, however, to give him the slip.

He must have read in my face that his information disturbed me, and, like a fool who believes that by multiplying words he gives yet further weight to his argument, the fellow launched forth in praises of this vast body of Tories who were to work us of Williamsburg so much injury.

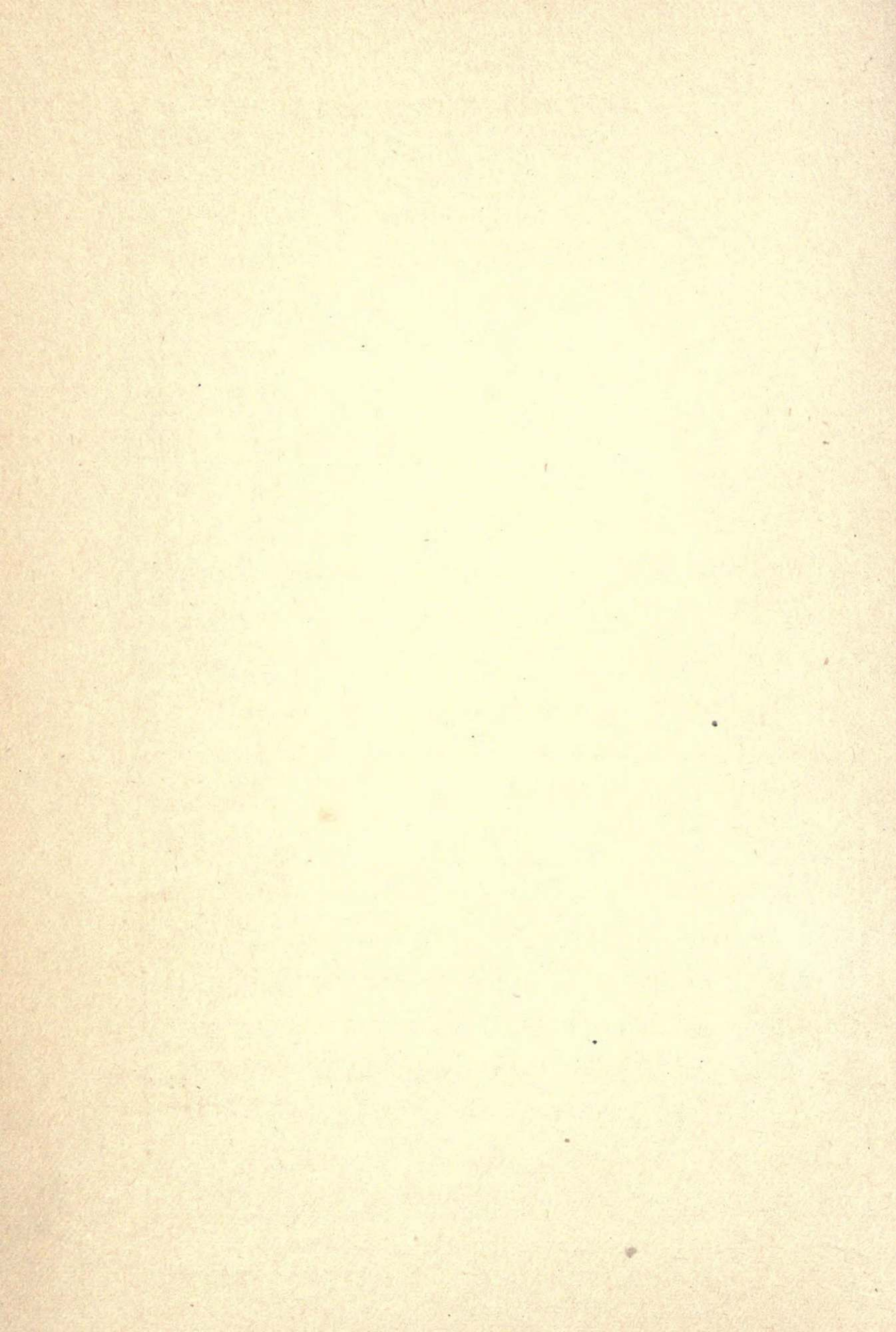
My impatience increased until it seemed no longer possible to stand there listening to what was little less than threats, and, seizing Percy by the hand lest in his anger he should leap upon the braggart, I said with so much of friendliness as could be assumed :

“As you have said, Master Lee, we are far from home, and it behooves us to retrace our steps before sunset, more particularly if there are so many traitors to their country in this vicinity as you would have us believe. We bid you good-day, and trust that the time may speedily come when it will not be so simple a matter to part company.”

“You may be certain that day is near at



As the Tory spoke, Percy leaped upon him.—Page 28
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hand," he replied in a menacing tone. "Before a week has passed I venture to predict the king's enemies in Williamsburg will be under close guard, powerless to say when they will go or come."

As the Tory spoke Percy wrenched himself free from my grasp, and leaped upon him.

To flog such a coward as Sam Lee was a simple matter, and I stepped aside lest it should afterward be said that two of us set upon one, thinking that while it might be imprudent for my brother to mete out the punishment which was merited, it was a duty which could not with honor be avoided.

Sam shrieked lustily, and before he had received half a dozen well-aimed blows I heard a great trampling in the underbrush; then came into view two score or more of men in the king's uniform, and for an instant I believed that the Tory's threat was about to be made good.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL MARION.

NOT until I had warned him, was Percy aware of the danger which menaced.

Intent only upon the task which he set himself, with a view of performing it in the shortest possible space of time, the lad gave no heed to anything else, and but for the fact of my being on watch, so to speak, I believe of a verity he would have been taken prisoner.

Even as it was, he did not cease his labors until the Tory crew were come within fifty yards of him, and then with one vigorous, well-directed blow by way of parting, Percy took to his heels.

I had at that moment started toward him, believing the lad was minded to give battle even though the odds were

twenty to one, for the James family of Williamsburg are not given to counting cost when the chances are heavily against them.

Then, seeing what was his inclination, I wheeled about almost at the very instant when the Tories sent a volley of bullets after us, and I do truly believe there was a blush of shame upon my cheek that men of Carolina should show themselves such wretched marksmen, for not a missile hit us, although the range could not have been above forty yards.

We were not minded to run in the open where the traitors might practise at shooting, with us as targets; but, bearing sharply to the left, we plunged into the thicket, where I felt certain such as those who would consort with Sam Lee could not come up with us.

Percy, whose blood had been warmed by the punishment given the young Tory, burned with a desire to halt and give battle.

“It would be folly for us to set ourselves against such odds when no benefit may be derived from the battle,” I said, speaking as we ran.

“If the odds are great, so much more thorough the lesson, and these skulking traitors surely need a check just now, when the fortunes of war seem to be in their favor.”

“Ay, but it is not for us to play the schoolmaster with less than half a horn of powder and five bullets,” I replied, checking back the mirth which came upon me when the dear lad spoke of making an attack almost empty-handed upon the Tories of Williamsburg.

It was such a suggestion as might be expected from a James of the Carolinas, and certain it is Percy would have halted with a smile upon his face and a sense of deepest satisfaction in his heart, even though by so doing we brought ourselves face to face with death.

He always looked upon me as a leader,

however, and now it was well he had been accustomed to do so, otherwise I doubt if we should ever have left that place alive.

“Since we must perforce return empty-handed, for there are no other mills to be sacked in this neighborhood, I would give much for the privilege of showing those fellows how to shoot, else will this day be wasted,” he said after a pause.

“In that you are making a mistake, lad. The day would surely be spent in vain if yonder band of Tories suffer no greater loss of numbers than we could inflict; but by running away now it may be possible to crush out the whole nest.”

“Then you have some plan in mind?” he cried eagerly.

“No more than this: After the reverses which have come to our people at Charleston something in the nature of success is necessary to revive the faint-hearted, and it can readily be done if we carry to General Marion word of what has been done. Unless I am much mistaken in our commander,

we shall soon have ample opportunity of showing these traitors how to shoot."

Now, and for the first time, Percy understood what might be the result of this day's failure, so far as we were concerned, to secure material for sabres.

It was no longer necessary for me to urge him to make greater speed in the retreat.

Halting only when forced to do so that we might regain breath, and giving no thought whatsoever to fatigue, the race was ended in a little more than two hours, when we stood before our uncle, the major, telling him of what we had seen at Pingree's Mill.

"It is a fortunate chance for us, lads," he said in a tone of satisfaction. "Scantily equipped as this force is, we need something to inflame the courage of our men."

"Sam Lee would have had us believe there were two thousand Tories nearabout, sir," I ventured to suggest, and the major looked at me searchingly for an instant.

“Does the odds make you timorous, lad?”

“Not so, sir. But that I believed it necessary General Marion should know of the encampment, Percy and I would have given them so much of a lesson as might be possible with five bullets. In fact, I found it somewhat difficult to force him along with me, so much averse was he to running away.”

My uncle's stern, questioning gaze disappeared on the instant, and gripping both of us lads by the hands, he said in a most friendly tone :

“I had no reason whatsoever to question your courage, for you are members of our family ; yet for the merest fraction of time it seemed as if you might perchance show the white feather when our enemies were in such force. Come with me to the general, and you shall see whether any account be taken of numbers, for now has the Cause fallen into such sore straits that every man who holds to it must consider himself equal to a dozen of the king's minions.”

Our brigade was set down, rather than encamped, in the woods; there were no shelters other than such as the men made for themselves with pine boughs, and the command bore but little semblance to a military organization.

Therefore it was that we were not troubled to gain audience with the commander.

The crimson jacket could be seen a long distance away under a huge live-oak tree, nearby where were three or four men building a camp-fire, and toward that gleaming spot of color we made our way.

“I would introduce to you two members of my family, sons of the Widow Sumter,” the major said as he saluted, and I was surprised at the change which passed over that serious, almost gloomy-looking face when a friendly expression came into his eyes.

It was as if he had thrown off the mask, and shown us a countenance almost the opposite to that which we had previously seen.

Nothing more was needed to tell me, that now indeed, we had a leader who was worthy to supersede my uncle.

“It pleases me to meet with those who are akin to such a true patriot as Major James,” the general said most courteously, and one needs remember that he was speaking to two lads, in order to understand how much such words meant.

“I can answer for it they will be true to any trust you may repose in them,” my uncle said, and Percy gripped me by the hand that I might understand how well pleased he was at such words of praise. “It was not simply to bring the lads to your notice that I have thus introduced them, General; they have information of greatest importance.”

General Marion turned toward us inquiringly, and in as few words as might be I told him of the encounter.

“A force of two thousand?” he said half to himself, and added as he looked me full in the eye. “Can you depend upon the

truthfulness of the lad who made the boast ?”

“Indeed we cannot, sir. I would have been inclined to doubt the entire story, had not forty or more appeared in response to Sam Lee’s cries for help.”

“Are you positive he spoke of Major Gainey as being in command ?”

“Ay, sir ; I remember well the name.”

“Are you lads enlisted with this force ?”

Instead of answering the question I looked toward my uncle, and he replied without hesitation :

“They are, General, if it please you to accept lads as young as they.”

“It is the will and the courage, rather than the age, which we need, Major James, and unless I have made a mistake in reading their faces, these sons of the Widow Sumter may do men’s work in the task which is set them.”

Percy and I made our best salute, as can well be fancied and from that moment counted ourselves as being enlisted under

that true general and valiant soldier, to whom the butcher Tarleton gave the name of "Swamp Fox."

The general, having acknowledged our salute, turned toward my uncle in such manner as gave us to understand that he wished to speak with him privately, and we withdrew a short distance, to where Gavin Witherspoon, an old acquaintance, was making ready for the eating a string of fish.

"Are you two lads come to see how soldiers live?" the old man asked with that peculiar grin which had earned for him the name of the "big mouthed."

"If we had, it would seem that we were come to the wrong place," Percy replied with a laugh. "Surely you are not counting yourself a soldier, Gavin Witherspoon?"

"I am allowin' I'll come as nigh to it as many who wear the king's uniform. It isn't always him who stands the stiffest that can bring down the most game, an'

there's no need of my tellin' two lads by the name of Sumter that we of Williamsburg are not given to wastin' ammuni-
tion."

"Of that I am not so certain," Percy retorted, "for within the past three hours, forty, who might perhaps claim this district as their home, had fair shot at us, and within fifty-yard range, therefore you can see for yourself whether the ammuni-
tion was wasted or not."

"Forty?" Gavin cried excitedly, forgetting for the instant his camp duties at this mention of the enemy.

I was not minded to keep the old man in suspense, therefore at once told him of what we had seen, whereupon he ceased his labors as cook and began overhauling the long, smooth-bore rifle, in the use of which he might truly be called an expert.

"Are you going out single-handed in search of them?" Percy asked banter-
ingly.

"Hark you, lads! I served under General

Marion in '75, when he was only a captain, and know full well what manner of man he is. Neither he nor Major James would remain here idle after such a story as you have brought, and I venture to say this mess of fish won't be needed until they are past cookin'."

Gavin Witherspoon had no more than spoken, before we heard the word passed from man to man around the encampment that an immediate advance was to be made.

Now to the credit of the men of Williamsburg, let me set down this fact, that without the least show of hesitation, although it was understood the enemy which we had reported far outnumbered us, every member of the brigade set about his preparations for the journey with apparently as much pleasure as if bent on some merry-making.

We were not well supplied with provisions, yet there were others than Gavin Witherspoon who left the food by the fires,

lest perchance they should be among the last who were ready.

I think no more than twenty minutes passed from the time of our arrival until everything was in readiness—every man mounted, except the commanding officers. and Percy said to me mournfully :

“It is like to benefit us but little, this having been enlisted under General Marion, for how may we keep pace with the horsemen ?”

I had asked myself that question, and decided that on this expedition, which rightfully belonged to us because of the discovery, we must perforce be left behind.

“All appear to have forgotten us ; even Gavin Witherspoon no longer looks our way,” Percy continued, and it was then that our uncle called us by name.

It can well be imagined that we lost no time in obeying the summons, and, approaching to where he was standing in company with the general and a captain, we heard that which gave us much pleasure.

“Captain Mouzon has generously offered you lads a mount. His spare horses are to be found back here in the thicket, under care of the servants,” my uncle said. “You will overtake us as soon as may be, and report at once to me. The general has been pleased to detail you for special duty.”

While speaking he mounted his horse, the others doing the same, and as Percy and I hurried away the word was given for the command to advance.

Even at the expense of telling over-much that may seem like dry reading, I must make especial mention of the advantage we had over the enemy, in the way of horses.

The Carolinians dearly loved a thoroughbred, and in Williamsburg district every soldier was mounted in kingly fashion.

The heavy, lumbering work-horses which were sold to the redcoats, were like snails compared with the blooded stock our people rode, and because of these did General Marion owe much of his success in the days to come, when we dashed here and there over

the country, striking a blow at night twenty miles or more away from where we had hurled ourselves upon the foe in the morning.

Now we two lads knew that Captain Mouzon had in his stables not less than thirty beasts which had no superiors in the neighborhood, and therefore were we positive of being astride such as would carry us well in the advance, however mad might be the pace set.

We found old Jacob, the captain's chief groom, in charge of four clean-limbed, noble beasts as ever wore a saddle, and it was not an easy matter to persuade him we had authority to select such as we chose, for he claimed that until a lad had had much experience in the hunting field, he was not to be trusted with a choice of mounts.

Threats would have availed us but little, for despite the old fellow's dark skin, he had a brave heart when the welfare of his stable was at stake, and therefore we spoke him fairly, using soft words rather than

harsh, until, coming to believe we were but repeating the words of his master, he saddled the horses we had selected.

Bestride such animals as could not well be excelled in the Carolinas, Percy and I set forth in pursuit of our friends, confident that we would be able to give a good account of ourselves, although sadly lacking an outfit.

“Unless it so be we can borrow powder and ball, I fear our share in the punishment of the Tories will be slight indeed,” my brother said mournfully, and I laughed at his gloomy face.

“Two hours ago, when we were hastening back from Pingree’s Mill, you would have said that with steeds like these we should be equipped in most kingly fashion, and now that we have under us the choice of Captain Mouzon’s stud, you find yet further necessities.”

“I leave it to you to say if five bullets and half a horn of powder make any very formidable outfit under such leaders as

General Marion and our uncle, the major, both of whom are like to show a greediness for fighting?"

It was a matter which could not be remedied, this lack of ammunition, until we were come up with some acquaintance who had a larger store than he needed, and such an one might be difficult to find in the district of Williamsburg, for we who held to the Cause were poor in everything save the desire to aid our country.

That exhilaration which comes with the stride of a horse when one is in the saddle was upon me, and, for the time being, I gave little heed to our necessities, save that I remembered with regret the fish Gavin Witherspoon had wasted.

After a tramp of twenty miles Percy and I stood in need of food, and but for our own foolhardiness we might have eaten our fill from the different messes which the men left behind, instantly the word was given that the enemy were in such position as invited attack.

When we were come up with the command, Major James beckoned for us to join the general and himself, and then it was we learned what work had been cut out for us.

“It is my desire,” General Marion said as if speaking to comrades, “that you two lads seek out the haunts of the Tories in this vicinity, and do not let it be known you are enlisted with us. While our numbers are few, the blows must be quick and frequent, therefore it is necessary we have constantly in advance searchers, or scouts, whichever you may choose to call them.”

“Are we to bear no share in the fighting, sir?” I ventured to ask, and a great disappointment came into my heart that we were to be of so little service.

“No more than absolutely necessary. You can serve the Cause to better purpose otherwise, for two lads like yourselves are less liable to suspicion when venturing in the enemy’s country.”

“Any who know us as members of the

James family will understand full well that we have no sympathy with the Tories," Percy cried, whereat the general laughed heartily as, turning to the major, he said :

"The ties of kinship are drawn more closely in the Carolinas than elsewhere in all the world, I believe, and well it should be so." Then he added, looking directly at me. "We shall stir up the nest which you two found, and perhaps give you a share of the fighting, but only because Britton's Neck is, from this point, on the direct road to another quarter I would have you visit. You may, if you please, join us in the first attack, and then I shall expect you to ride toward Indian Village, where I have reason to believe certain enemies under one Captain Barfield may be found. You will gain so much of information as is possible, and report to me somewhere on the east bank of Cedar Creek."

So that we were to join in this first attack I gave little thought for the future,

and said to myself that if we proved our metal in one case we might find further opportunities.

The general dismissed us with a friendly nod, and we rode down the line, hoping to find some friend who would loan us powder and ball.

In this last quest we were so far successful as to obtain, perhaps, sufficient for five charges more, and then we had even a larger store than many a man who rode with the brigade.

It was within an hour of sunset when we set out for Britton's Neck, on the first ride Percy and I had ever undertaken for the Cause, and it would please me much to repeat all the incidents of that night's journey, for they are so deeply impressed upon my memory as never to be effaced by whatsoever of adventure may come to me later in life.

It is not well that I devote so much space, however, to what others may think uninteresting, and, therefore, acting on Percy's

advice, I shall say no more concerning the journey when our brigade, only four companies strong, rode through the silent hours of the night at a slow trot, eager to measure strength with an enemy known to be several times greater in numbers than we could muster.

The gray light of the early dawn was just becoming tinged with that yellow tint which betokens the near approach of the sun, when at a signal from Major James we came to a halt.

Not until that moment could I see any signs of the enemy, and then, gazing in the direction indicated by General Marion's outstretched hand, I saw dimly amid the mist the outlines of an encampment so large, that for the moment I had no question but what Sam Lee told us only the truth when he said the force of Tories to be full two thousand.

It may have been one minute or ten that we remained there, horses and men silent, and motionless as statues; so great was

my excitement that I could not count the passage of time. Only this do I know, that it seemed as if we wasted all that early time of morning twilight before the signal was given.

Then it was my uncle raised his hat, waving it above his head at the instant he gave rein to his horse, and so eager were our men to be at the throats of the enemy, that before the major's steed had fairly made the first bound, every member of the brigade was riding forward in mad haste.

The onward rush of that body of horsemen must have presented a singular spectacle, had any one been near at hand to look at it calmly.

In the gray light four hundred or more men riding at full speed in perfect silence, save for the thud of the horses' feet upon the sward, and with them in their very midst, thanks to the fleetness of Captain Mouzon's steeds, were Percy and I.

My one thought was that to prove myself a worthy follower of such a commander,

I must in this attack appear the equal of any man in the ranks, and, having such aim in view, I urged the willing steed forward.

Percy was not minded to be left behind when there was a chance one might be accused of timorousness, and side by side we rode as if on a wager, soon outstripping all save two who were leading the advance.

These two were the major, our uncle, and Captain Mouzon, owner of the horses we bestrode.

We four were well up to the edge of the encampment by the time I understood we were comparatively alone, and not until then, when the first word was spoken, did I fully realize the situation.

“The Mouzon stables lead!” the captain cried triumphantly, thinking even at that moment of peril more about his horses than himself.

“But the tribe of James are riding them!” the major shouted, and then, as if

he had come up through the earth, a Tory horseman appeared directly in front of us.

Two pistols were discharged almost in our very faces—so near that the mane of my horse was singed by the fire, and then this particular enemy was in full retreat.

“It is Major Gainey!” our leader shouted as he struck the spurs into his steed, and before one had time to realize anything more we four were in the very midst of the Tory band, while around us, forming a circle of fire, were the flashes of burning powder.

CHAPTER III.

THE TORY CAMP.

IT was the first time Percy and I had ever taken part in a deadly encounter, and, perchance, had there been opportunity for us to consider the situation, one or both might have shown the white feather.

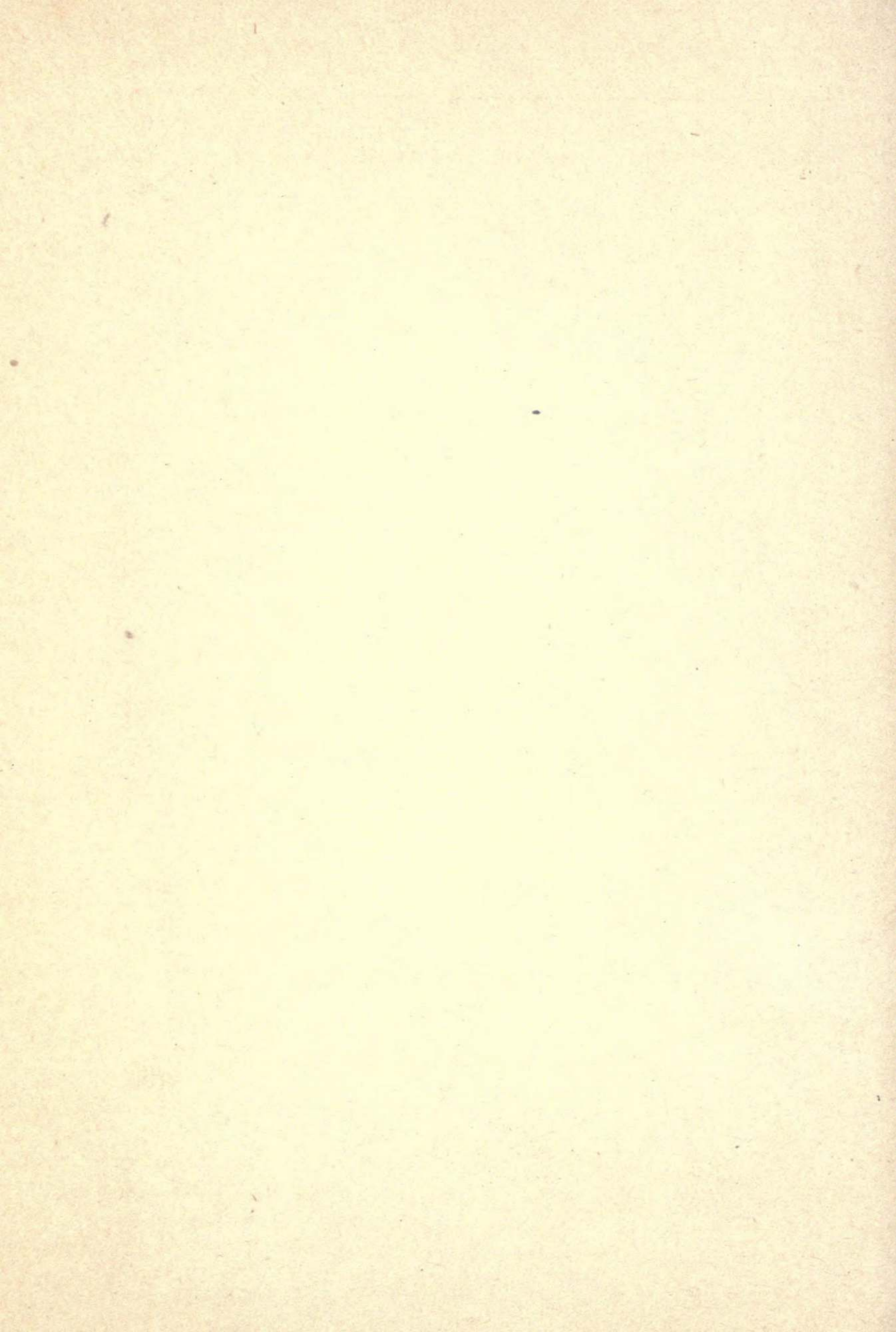
As it was, however, and I have since noted the fact on every similar occasion, there was no opportunity for fear; the fever of excitement was upon us; the odor of burned powder mounted to one's brain, as it were, and we became more like brutes than human beings.

There was to me a certain sense of satisfaction in the danger; a savage delight in shooting, with intent to kill, at the enemies of our country, and above all, the knowledge



Then suddenly a redcoated Tory rushed toward me with upraised
saber.—Page 49.

With the Swamp Fox.



that we were proving ourselves worthy a place in the James family.

I saw Captain Mouzon's horse fall, and looked with a certain curiosity to see how he might extricate himself from the weight of the animal.

I also wondered where Sam Lee might be, hoping it would be my good fortune to come upon him. Then suddenly, when my musket was empty, a redcoated Tory rushed toward me with upraised saber.

I tried to ward off the blow with my gun, knowing full well that I could not hope to be successful in such an encounter, and then the man suddenly fell to the ground as if stricken by a bolt of lightning.

It was Percy who had brought the Tory down, thus saving my life, and I heard him, as one hears from afar off, cry impatiently :

“ My last charge of powder is gone ! ”

It is impossible for me to say, and I have pondered over the matter again and again, why it was that the scene suddenly

changed, or how we three—for now that Captain Mouzon was on foot he did not count as one of our squad—emerged from that tangle of men, and found ourselves in pursuit of the fleeing, panic-stricken enemy. I remember clearly that one moment it was as if we were entirely surrounded, and the next, all was clear before us, save for that blotch of red in the distance which we pursued at the full speed of our horses, Major James shouting now and again as if to give us lads courage:

“If it so be that we ride hard they cannot escape us! Spare not your horses, lads, and we shall soon clear Williamsburg district of the nest of vipers that should have been crushed out years ago!”

I was near to smiling, despite the fact that this was a race in which human life had been put at stake, because our uncle should suggest that we might take any part in wiping out the “vipers,” when our last charge of ammunition was expended,

and we carried no other arms than muskets.

Yet did we press on at his heels with all the speed of which Captain Mouzon's steeds were capable, eager to gain the advance if that might be, lest he should for a single instant fancy we had grown faint-hearted.

It was the first time we had had an opportunity of proving that the James blood ran in our veins, and had I been certain death awaited me at the end of that mad chase, I would have spurred my horse on yet faster, exulting in the thought that I might come to my end in such noble fashion as now, when following the lead of Major James!

Percy shouted like one who is without sense, and yet there was no thought in my mind of chiding him, for I understood full well why it was that the sound of his own voice seemed necessary—it was but the natural vent of the excitement that had taken hold of him like as a fever, and I

have since been told that I also cried out unmeaning words; but yet was unconscious of having done so.

Then suddenly the scene changed again, and with this transformation came into my heart what was very like fear.

One moment it was as if we had the whole of General Marion's force at our heels, and the next we were alone, riding down into that mass of fleeing Tories who outnumbered us two hundred to one, while not a friend of the Cause could be seen in the rear.

I saw Major James glancing over his shoulder, and involuntarily I copied the movement, although for thirty seconds or more had I known we were so far in the advance as to be practically cut off from our friends.

There was no change of expression in my uncle's face when he realized that we were come into sore danger—for now we were well upon the heels of the enemy;—but he looked at me as if asking whether the

knowledge of our situation brought timorousness into my heart.

I have ever been proud because at that instant I answered his inquiring look with such words as tickled his fancy mightily :

“There be three of us, Major, and more are not needed.”

It was the speech of a braggart, but yet under such circumstances the words gave my uncle more confidence in our courage than almost anything else could have done, and an expression, which for the moment I took to be affection, came over his face as he replied in a ringing tone :

“God bless the sister who gave to me such nephews !” Then, waving his saber and shouting at the full strength of his lungs as if he had a thousand men behind him, he cried, “Here they are, boys ! Here they are ! Come on !”

I believe of a verity that the Tories fancied he was calling to a large force, rather than to two lads who were practi-

cally weaponless, for their panic increased, if that could be possible, and they crowded upon each other's heels until the advance was impeded.

With fifty well-armed men at that time I venture to say we might have wiped out Major Gainey's entire force, and that officer himself was nigh to being taken prisoner when my uncle, spurring his horse into the very midst of the fugitives, singled out the leader as if challenging him to mortal combat.

Major Gainey, although he was a Tory, had never been called a coward; but on this morning he absolutely refused the challenge, and instead of halting to meet the foe as he would have done had his cause been just, he forced aside the weaker of his following, and succeeded in making good an escape.

“It was shame enough that one from Williamsburg should be a Tory,” my uncle cried, brandishing his saber in impotent rage; “but that a Gainey would show him-

self a coward as well, I have never believed until this hour."

It was strange indeed that of all the enemy we pursued so hotly and so closely, none turned upon us.

It would have been a simple task for a dozen of them, armed as we knew they were, to have allowed us to come into their midst, and then, closing, taken all three prisoners, or shot us down as might best have suited their fancy.

The fever of fear, however, was upon them until there was no thought in the minds of any save of individual safety, and during ten minutes or more we rode upon the heels of that retreating rabble, taunting them with such words as should have turned the faintest-hearted at bay.

There were seconds during that chase when I trembled with what was like unto a fear, realizing all which it was possible for them to do, and then that sensation would pass away while rage took possession of me because of my inability to do

other than lash the miserable Tories with my tongue.

Then Major James wheeled suddenly about, for we had come to the edge of Pedee Swamp, and, by his gesture rather than words, we understood that it was our turn to retreat.

The Tories were forced, because of the water, to ride more slowly, and should we still press upon them they must, even like rats, turn at bay; when, as a matter of course, the end would have come for us.

We had shown them what a man could do whose cause was just, and it would have been folly to continue on to the useless sacrifice of our own lives.

We turned about, as I have said, in obedience to my uncle's signal, and rode to the rear faster than we came, for now was there fear some of the cowardly foe might shoot us in the back, and before drawing rein we came upon General Marion and Captain M'Cottry.

These two were, like ourselves, far in

advance, and by reining in his horse the general forced us to halt.

Now occurred that which I shall ever remember with the most intense pride and satisfaction so long as the breath remains in my body.

He who was to be afterward so well-known as the "Swamp Fox," he who was the bravest among all the brave men in the Carolinas, leaning forward in the saddle held out his hands, one to each of us lads, and said in a tone so hearty that there could be no mistaking the sentiment in his heart:

"I have ever believed the members of the James family to be true to their country, their friends, and to themselves; but never before had I expected to see two boys ride at their kinsman's call straight into what seemed certain danger. I am proud indeed that you were eager to seek service under my command, and promise that if my life be spared you shall have fitting opportunity to show your devotion to the Cause."

We lads were unable to speak because of the pride and pleasure which filled our hearts to overflowing; but my uncle, taking off his hat with more of homage than I had ever seen him bestow upon any other man, made reply :

“When General Marion is pleased to speak such words to members of my family, he places under obligation every one of us.”

“There can be no sense of obligation, Major, when the praise has been won so handsomely.”

“In that I agree with you, General, and more particularly because neither of my nephews had a charge of ammunition. After the first rush they followed bravely, although virtually weaponless, and I am happy to be able to call them my sister’s sons. The ride is completed, and we now await your orders.”

“Have all the force escaped?” the general asked.

“Ay, sir, all save those who may have

been rendered unable to continue the retreat. They are in Pedee Swamp where it would be worse than folly to make any attempt at following them."

The general wheeled his horse around, motioning Percy and I to ride by his side, and together we returned to where the main body of our brigade was halted.

Here after a short time we learned that a captain and nine men had been killed from among the Tory force, while our loss amounted to only two wounded, and it was safe to say that many days would elapse before Major Gainey's regiment could be got into fighting shape again.

There was no reason why any of us should longer suffer from hunger, for we were in possession of the Tory camp where were provisions in abundance, and during an hour we feasted, Percy and I, as only lads can who have been without food nigh on to four and twenty hours.

Then, when believing it would be possible to return to our home for a short time—

and we were eager to tell our mother of the proud distinction we had won—word was brought by one of the troopers that General Marion would speak with us.

I venture to say there was not a man in the brigade who did not envy us two lads as we went toward that portion of the thicket where the commander was seated under a live oak tree with his officers clustered about him, and I am also quite certain that of all the force, we two had the least right to be praised or singled out for preferment.

Among those who served the Cause in the Carolinas there were no cowards; it appeared much as if the timorous ones turned Tories because, by professing to serve the king, a colonist is not required to bear so many hardships or encounter so many dangers, as those who would throw off his majesty's yoke. Therefore it was that when an officer like General Marion selected two from among all that gathering, it was indeed a great distinction, and

we understood by his sending for us that we were like to be called upon for an especial service, as he had already intimated.

Although unused to such a life as we had so suddenly embarked upon, Percy and I contrived to salute the general in something approaching military fashion, and he, returning it, asked in the tone of a friend rather than of one who commands :

“Are you lads minded to set out on a venture which has in it much of danger?”

Percy looked at me as if to say that I should act as spokesman, and I replied more readily than perhaps was courteous, fearing lest it might be fancied we hesitated :

“Aye, sir; that we are, and the more of danger the more readily do we set out. I say this last not in a boasting manner, but to show you, sir, that we are right willing to lay down our lives for the good of the Cause which our uncle serves.”

“It is well spoken, young sir. I had

no doubt of your willingness ; but rather made mention of the danger that you might have an opportunity to draw back honorably, if it so be you shrank in any degree from the task, for it is one through which little honor can be gained, although the service must be performed."

"We are ready for whatsoever pleases you, sir," I said, and Percy laid his hand in mine that it might be understood he repeated the words.

"Between here and Dubose Ferry—the precise location you must yourselves determine—one Captain Barfield lies encamped, having under him a force not less than four hundred strong. Our purpose is to advance upon him immediately ; but having learned that there is a possibility his men may far exceed ours in numbers, it is necessary we have full information before venturing an attack. Are you minded to seek him out, and learn all that may be ascertained within a few hours, returning to us before nightfall ?"

“We will set out at once, sir. Captain Mouzon lent us horses that we might join in the march, and perhaps he will allow us to use them in this service,” I said, turning toward the captain, who replied readily :

“That you may, lads, and in welcome. I am right glad that the Mouzon stables can furnish mounts for such riders as you have shown yourselves to be.”

“Then we will set out at once, sir,” I said to the general. “The horses have already been cared for, and should be able to make the journey without distress.”

“There is no time to be lost. You yourselves are to decide how the information we desire can best and most safely be obtained, for it would be unwise to hamper you with advice or commands. At about noon the brigade will set out at a slow pace in the direction of Dubose Ferry, and I hope you may be able to meet us several miles this side of the encampment. We shall ride so nearly as may be in a

straight line, and at about nightfall keep sharp watch for your approach. The most important information is as to the number of the enemy ; then the general position of the camp, and, finally, how it may be best come upon."

Having said this the general saluted, as did the officers round about him, and Percy and I, understanding that we were dismissed, would have moved away, but that the major, my uncle, stepped forward, taking us each by the hand.

He spoke no word ; but I understood that he was bidding us good-by, and his manner of doing it told me, had such information been necessary, how dangerous was the mission with which we were charged.

Again the general and his officers saluted, and then we, turning on our heels, set about making ready for the departure.

Some of the men lounging nearabout would have spoken with us ; but I was not minded to indulge in conversation just at

that moment, and it seemed much as if Percy had the same idea.

Beginning to realize more fully each moment what this duty on which we were embarked might mean, I feared lest we grow faint-hearted because of the perils. To have spoken with any one regarding the service, would have been to show us more plainly all that it meant, and silence was safest if we would hold our uncle's good opinion.

The horses were saddled, and we about to mount when Gavin Witherspoon, whom I had not seen since the attack, came up hurriedly and with the air of one who is in a fault-finding mood.

“So! We are much puffed up with pride, eh, since it has been our good fortune to follow Major James in pursuit of a lot of scurvy Tories? We don't care to speak with old friends?”

“Now you are disgruntled without cause, Gavin Witherspoon,” Percy said laughingly. “How may it be possible that we

“speak with old or new friends when we fail to meet them. Since you dropped the fish so hurriedly, we have not had a glimpse of your face, and I question if you cared to meet us until, perhaps, within an hour.”

“I have been looking for you high and low since we came to a halt here.”

“Then it must be your eyes are grown dim with age,” I said, now joining my brother in his mirth, for the old man’s anger was comical rather than serious. “We unsaddled our horses in this spot, and have remained until within ten minutes under this same tree, therefore it could not have been a difficult matter to find us.”

“But there is no reason for fault-finding, and we have little time to spend in conversation,” Percy added.

“You will speak with me though!” Gavin said, seizing the bridle of my horse as if fearing I was about to ride away. “In what direction are you two lads going?”

“That we may not say,” Percy replied quickly. “It is enough that we are acting upon General Marion’s orders.”

“That is as I suspected,” Gavin cried, shaking his fist at Percy as if the lad had proven himself guilty of some serious crime. “You would slip away from the old man, believing yourselves so wondrous brave that he isn’t fit to join in any adventure however trifling?”

“Now you are talking wildly, Gavin Witherspoon,” I said, losing my patience, for, knowing we had but little time at our disposal, I was fretted by what seemed to me no more than folly. “We have been entrusted with a duty which must be performed immediately, and may not stand here parleying with you over trifling matters.”

“It is my intention you shall remain until I can have speech with General Marion, or failing him, with Major James.”

“Why should we wait for that?” Percy asked, leaping into the saddle, and as he

did so the old man seized the bridle of his horse also.

“Because I am counting on going with you. I promised your mother six months or more ago that when you two lads were minded to turn soldiers I would keep an eye upon you, and now has come the time when I must fulfil the pledge, or write myself down a liar.”

I knew enough of the old man's character to understand that we could not browbeat him into loosing his hold of the bridle, and was not minded to ride over him. Therefore said with as much of patience as I could assume :

“So that you move quickly, we will wait until you can speak with either officer you name ; but remember, Gavin, we are under orders to set off without delay.”

“What have you in the way of weapons ?”

Until this moment, strange as it may seem, I had entirely lost sight of the fact that we were virtually unarmed, and now

I realized the folly of setting out so wholly unprepared.

“We must have ammunition if nothing more,” I said hurriedly, “and while you are gone in search of the general, I will set about procuring it. Therefore the time spent in waiting for you will not be wasted.”

Gavin Witherspoon now seemed to have every confidence that we would not slip away from him, and hurried off toward the other end of the encampment, while I went from one acquaintance to another in search of powder and ball.

In this quest I was more successful than had seemed possible.

Knowing that we lads had been entrusted with a mission, the men bestirred themselves to see that we were outfitted properly, and soon our store of ammunition was even greater than could be used to advantage.

We had two horns full of powder, thirty or forty balls, and a couple of pistols;

more than that would have hampered our movements.

Perhaps no more than ten minutes had been spent in outfitting ourselves, and yet this time was sufficient for Gavin to make his preparations to accompany us, as was shown when he rode up while I was dividing the ammunition with Percy.

“Is it really your purpose to follow us?” I asked in surprise, for it had not seemed to me probable the old man would be allowed to join in the venture.

“I am not countin’ to *follow*, lads; but ride side by side with you, and perhaps somewhat in advance. I’m not thinkin’ of letting you go on this mission alone——”

“It may be safer for two than for three,” Percy said half to himself, and the old man, without so much as turning his head, replied solemnly and in such a tone as impressed me strangely :

“There is nothing whatsoever of safety in an attempt to ride from here to Dubose Ferry, for two, or even a dozen of those

who love the cause. My going with you will neither increase nor lessen the danger, because that is impossible. It may be, however, that I can give a word of advice which will prevent your coming to a final end quite so soon, for I hold to it that General Marion and Major James have this day sent you lads to what is little less than death."

Having thus spoken, and in a manner well calculated to disturb even the stoutest hearted lad, the old man wheeled his horse about and rode in the direction of Dubose Ferry, never so much as turning his head to see if we were following him.

CHAPTER IV.

SAMUEL LEE.

HAD Gavin Witherspoon been less strange in his manner, I should have taken little heed of his joining us in the mission with which we had been entrusted by General Marion, because the old man was often given to whims, and this could well have been considered as simply a fancy on his part to indulge in the love for adventure.

If he had contented himself with vague words concerning the possible danger, neither Percy nor I would have paid any particular attention to him, believing he simply magnified the peril in order that it might appear as if he counted on being able to protect us.

His manner, however, was so exceeding

odd—I can find no word which comes nearer explaining it—that I believed at once he was in possession of some knowledge which we did not share, and therefore had good reason for crediting all he said.

A year later, perhaps, after I had had more experience in what some gentlemen are pleased to call the “art of warfare,” I might have held my peace, trusting in our ability to ward off such dangers as should arise, but then, ignorant as we were of a soldier’s life, the old man’s actions impressed me disagreeably, as I have said already, and I was minded to demand from him an explanation.

Never before had I found it a difficult matter to gain speech with Gavin Wither-spoon, for the old man was prone to indulge in conversation regardless of suitable opportunity or place; but on this morning Percy and I found it necessary to ride at full speed in order to come alongside our self-appointed guardian, and we were, perhaps, five miles from the camp when I

finally succeeded in forcing him to open his mouth.

“If you count to ride with us, Master Witherspoon, and claim that it is your purpose to protect Percy and I, we at least have the right to know why such an escort is considered necessary.”

“That I have already explained,” the old man replied curtly, and would have spurred ahead of us once more but that Percy caught his bridle rein, as he said sharply :

“We are minded, Gavin Witherspoon, to know the meaning of your mysterious words and odd behavior. If it so be you know more concerning the enemy than is told among the men of our brigade, let us hear it now, that my brother and I may be in some degree prepared for coming events.”

“I have ridden with the command, and had no more means of gaining information than others. What may be in my mind has come there through what I call sound commonsense.”

“And you have reasoned out that we are in greater danger than we were four and twenty hours ago?” I said with a laugh, beginning to feel somewhat of relief in my mind by this discovery, as I believed, that the old man’s fears were the result of his own imagination.

He must have read in the tone of my voice somewhat of that in my mind, for, reining in his horse, he wheeled around to face Percy and myself as he replied, speaking slowly and with exceeding earnestness :

“It was known to the leaders of our brigade that Captain Barfield had a force of Tories nearabout Dubose Ferry. Think you Major Gainey and his men did not have the same information?”

“Of course they did,” I replied, wondering greatly what the old man would come at.

“It is no more of a journey from Pedee Swamp to Dubose Ferry, than from where we halted for breakfast.”

Again he paused as if waiting some reply ; but neither Percy nor I spoke, for as yet we failed to understand what he was trying to convey.

“Major Gainey’s force has lost an outfit, since our people took possession of it, and must, therefore, seek another encampment. Do you believe they will be content to remain in the swamp, knowin’ their friends are near at hand?”

“It would be reasonable that they rode in the direction of the Ferry,” Percy said, an expression of deepest seriousness chasing away the smile which had been upon his lips.

“Very well. Since you allow that, there is no need for me to say more. It is the general belief that Gainey had near to two thousand men with him, an’ think you they will not fight, however much cowardice may be in their hearts, when next we ride upon them? If these two forces of Tories come together—and by this time I venture to say the men we routed in the early dawn

have begun to understand how few we are in numbers—I look to see hot work. Therefore it is I predict that before arrivin' at Dubose Ferry we shall meet with many of those who so lately fled before us.”

I now realized why the old man looked upon the situation as being grave in the extreme, and there was no further inclination in my mind to make sport of his forebodings.

Having learned what it might, perhaps, have been better we did not know, Percy and I became quite as solemn as was Gavin Witherspoon, and we three rode on again as if certain some evil fortune was about to overtake us, neither so much as speaking until half an hour or more had passed, when we came to a sudden halt.

Our road at this time lay through the bottom-lands, which were covered with a growth of scrub oaks, and we had heard a noise as of horsemen forcing their way through the foliage.

This it was which had caused us to halt so

suddenly, and I was looking to my rifle to make certain it was loaded, when Sam Lee came into view.

He was riding a heavily-built iron-gray horse, the very animal I could have sworn to seeing during the brush with Major Gainey's force. Upon his face was an expression of deepest satisfaction and joy, which did not change materially when he saw us.

Percy, quicker than I at such times, cried out for the Tory to halt, and he wisely obeyed the command, knowing full well his steed would have no show in a race with such animals as we bestrode, even though our rifles might not have brought him to a halt.

"Well," he asked, with an evil look upon his face. "Since when have you begun to stop peaceful travelers?"

"We have not yet commenced," I cried, allowing anger to take possession of me. "In these times a Tory cannot lay claim to peacefulness, and it is our purpose to

make such prisoners whenever and wherever we find them."

"And I am a prisoner, eh?" he asked, with not the slightest show of fear, and I was surprised thereat, because we knew him to be a rank coward.

"Throw down your musket an' hold up your hands while Percy makes search for pistols!" Gavin Witherspoon said sternly, for the old man was a ready comrade in times when quick action became necessary.

Sam Lee obeyed without a word, and after a brief search we discovered that he had no other weapons than the musket which lay upon the ground.

Still he appeared well satisfied—even pleased.

It angered me yet further, this show of carelessness, and I cried hastily:

"You were in no such happy mood this morning, when we chased your friends into the swamp--when less than four hundred men put to flight two thousand!"

Gavin Witherspoon turned upon me

quickly, and with such a show of temper as caused me to understand in an instant that I had thus given to the enemy information concerning the size of General Marion's force.

It was too late to recall the words, unfortunately, and Sam, giving no heed to the old man's show of resentment at my folly, replied to the words which I had believed would humiliate him :

“The condition of affairs in the Carolinas have changed wonderfully within the past few days, and we who are loyal inhabitants of the colony have little to fear from rebels.”

Now did I realize that this Tory lad was certain of his ground, else he would not have dared to speak in such strain, and the result was that I, rather than our prisoner, grew disheartened.

Gavin Witherspoon also pricked up his ears at this bold speech from the lad who had heretofore been so cowardly as never to venture an opinion lest he make trouble

for himself, and the old man asked as he advanced toward the rascal threateningly :

“What is it that has given you such a dose of courage, you Tory cur?”

Sam winced, as if believing Gavin Wither-
spoon was about to strike him, and then,
understanding an instant later that we
were not of his kidney, who would ill-treat
a prisoner, replied with a laugh which
aroused all my anger again :

“Your General Gates with his rag-tag
and bob-tail of an army has been cut to
pieces at Camden by Lord Cornwallis !
What you are pleased to call the ‘Cause,’
is now wiped out from the Carolinas !”

We three sat speechless with dismay,
gazing at each other questioningly, appre-
hensively, as the young Tory told a story
which we at the time believed to be true,
and afterward came to learn that no part
had been exaggerated.

General Gates, who believed himself to
to be more of a soldier than was the fact,
had moved from Rugely's Mills on the

evening of the 15th, with his entire force, never so much as sending scouts in advance to learn whether the enemy might be in the vicinity. His raw recruits were suddenly met by a volley from the British skirmishers, and, retreating so far as seemed necessary for safety, lay upon their arms until morning.

When the sun rose any other general than Gates would have known he was defeated, even before trying the issue. His men, unused to service, were formed in the swamp with the reserve only a few hundred yards in the rear of the battle line. Perhaps not one out of ten of these had ever been under fire, and opposed to them were picked soldiers—the best to be found in the king's regiments stationed at Charleston and Camden.

At sunrise General Gates ordered the advance of the Virginia militia, who were met by the redcoats with such a deadly volley that the division retreated before more than half of them had discharged

their muskets. The North Carolina militia followed the disgraceful example, as did also the cavalry, and a charge by the British horse completed the rout.

Only the Continentals under command of De Kalb held their ground until further resistance would have been madness, and the battle of Camden had been half fought, and wholly lost.

No wonder Sam Lee was triumphant.

To us who heard the story it seemed as if his boast that the Cause had been killed in the Carolinas was neither more nor less than the truth, and for a moment I fancied it our duty to return without loss of time to warn General Marion.

Now it may seem strange to whosoever shall read these lines, that we believed so readily all the Tory told us; but we had good cause for credulity.

Old soldiers among us—and the men of my mother's family had been in arms from the time the colonists first began resistance against the king's oppression—had again

and again argued that General Gates was not a skilful officer, despite his victory at Saratoga.

When it was known that General Marion, who up to the time of taking command in the Williamsburg district had been only a colonel, was to leave the staff of Gates, our people predicted a disaster similar to what it seemed had just occurred.

Therefore, when Sam Lee, liar and coward though he was naturally, gave us an account of the battle with so much of detail he could not have invented, we, unfortunately, had no choice but to believe the tale.

It was Gavin Witherspoon who first regained sufficient composure to understand what should be done, and he soon showed the Tory that, however hardly our people had been used, it would not avail him under the present circumstances.

“ It seems to me necessary we keep this young cub with us, however disagreeable the association may be, and do you lads

lash him on the saddle in such fashion that he will not be able to make his escape without assistance."

Although believing for the moment that we ought to return immediately to General Marion, I obeyed the old man's order, and now it was that the look of satisfaction and exultation began to vanish from the coward's face.

He had counted on our so far losing heart as to make an attempt at currying favor with him, or, at least, pass him by, and our thus guarding against the possibility of escape was by no means to his liking.

"What is to be done?" I asked when the lad was secure, for I now realized, as did Percy, that Gavin Witherspoon should be given the command of our squad.

"We shall push on as was at first intended, keeping our wits well about us, lest we be surprised by others of this fellow's kidney, who are making haste to join Barfield. After having accomplished

that for which we were sent, if it be possible, there will be time enough to repeat the disagreeable story."

I am making an overly long story of what should be told in fewer words, prompted to do so because of the fear which beset me at this time and caused the matter to seem of more importance than it really was.

We pressed forward two hours or more, Percy and I riding either side of the prisoner, and Gavin Witherspoon keeping in advance.

Then we were come, as nearly as could be judged, to the vicinity of the Tory camp, and might no longer with safety use the horses.

Still acting under Gavin Witherspoon's command, we picketed our steeds in the thicket, leaving them and the prisoner to the charge of Percy, while the old man and I pressed forward to reconnoiter.

This work occupied a full hour, and the time was by no means wasted, be-

cause when it had expired we were well informed as to the number of Barfield's men.

To the best of our belief there were not less than eight hundred Tories fairly well entrenched at Dubose Ferry, and Gavin said to me as we turned to retrace our steps :

“ There will be no fighting this night, unless we are driven to it, for neither General Marion nor Major James, however brave they may be, will make the attack with such odds against us, particularly while it is certain this same force of Tories will be reinforced before nightfall by those whom we drove into the swamp.”

A similar thought was in my own mind, and therefore I made no reply.

It was necessary we rejoin our friends before they should have come so far as to put themselves in a dangerous position, and Gavin and I hurried back to where we had left Percy.

We had no difficulty in finding the place where we tethered the horses, and once

there the cold sweat of fear broke out upon my forehead.

Percy, and prisoner, and the three horses which we had ridden, were not to be seen. But for the fact that the gray steed of Sam Lee was feeding close by, I would have said we had mistaken the location.

Words are not sufficient to describe my condition of mind when this horrible truth burst upon me. I could not so much as speak; but looked questioningly at the old man, who said slowly and in a half whisper, after gazing carefully around:

“The boy has been captured by some of Gainey’s cowards who no doubt are hunting for us at this moment. Sam Lee knew for what purpose we went ahead, and as a matter of course has given his Tory friends all possible information.”

“Why do we stand here idly?” I cried, regaining speech when the horrible fact had been put before me in words. “We cannot desert him, and at whatsoever cost must go in pursuit.”

“It is not possible we could compass anything save our own capture,” Gavin Witherspoon said, speaking slowly, and gripping hard both my hands as if to give me comfort.

“Surely you will not turn your back upon him,” I cried in a fury, trying to wrench myself from his grasp; “if that cowardly thought be in your mind you shall go alone, for I had rather face all Barfield’s force single-handed, than have it said I deserted my brother.”

“Fair and softly, Robert Sumter, fair and softly. I am not minded to go back. It is you who shall do that.”

“But I will not,” and again I strove to release my hands.

“Listen to me, lad, and the sooner the better for your brother’s sake, because I shall hold you here by force until having laid the case squarely before you. Would you have it told that one of the James family, on account of his own personal grief, allowed four hundred brave men to

ride on to destruction? Would you have it said that rather than desert your brother you allowed the men of Williamsburg to face certain capture or death? Yet that is what must happen unless you are willing to do as I bid."

"But let me hear what is in your mind, for until then how can I answer the questions you ask!" and now I was grown more tractable, understanding that the old man knew better than I what was necessary both for the safety of Percy, and those who were riding behind us.

"There is but one horse here, and it would be unsafe to set out on foot. Having had many more years of experience than you, I should be more capable of following the Tories who have Percy in their keeping, and having come upon them, if there be a chance for his rescue, ought to be able to take better advantage of the opportunity than you. Now this is my plan: Mount the gray horse and ride back until you have met our friends; tell them what has oc-

curred, and perchance Major James will send forward ten or twelve experienced woodsmen, who will help me in what seems little better than a forlorn hope. At all events, the gentlemen whom we both can trust implicitly will know the situation, and advise what we may do with honor. In addition to that you will be spared the pain of confessing in later days that you did what a James should never do—left your friends to ride blindly into such danger as has never before come upon men of the Carolinas.”

It was not easy to follow this advice, as may well be imagined, and I spent fully five minutes trying to force myself to do it.

It seemed as if by going back when Percy had been forced to go forward, I was deserting him, and yet such seeming desertion was necessary to save, perhaps, the entire Williamsburg district.

“You will return as a brave lad should,” the old man said finally, and, my heart

well-nigh bursting with grief, I made reply by mounting the gray horse.

Not until then did I realize how much Gavin Witherspoon had taken upon himself.

The old man was voluntarily remaining behind on foot, surrounded by enemies, in the vain hope that he might by some fortunate accident rescue Percy, and I knew full well that the chances were as one in a thousand that it could not be done.

In other words, he was doing little less than delivering himself into the hands of the enemy and I—I was deserting him as well as my brother.

“I can't do it, Gavin,” I said, making as if to dismount. “It is better you ride back.”

“No, lad. Having once come to a brave decision, hold steadfast, and forget all else save that the Cause demands the sacrifice, perchance of your life, and certainly of your feelings. Push the horse at his best pace, which will be a sorry one at the most,

and before many hours have passed we may grasp hands again ; but I solemnly swear not to desert Percy whatever may come upon me."

I clasped the old man's hand, understanding for the first time in my life what a friend he was. Then, not daring to so much as speak, I set the spurs deep into the gray, and he bounded forward with more of life than I had expected it would be possible for him to show.

The wonder of it all to me is now, while I am writing it down after so many months have passed, that I was not captured before having traversed a mile on the backward journey, for I saw nothing, heeded nothing, thought of nothing save Percy and the brave old man who was following on his trail.

Heedless alike of friend or foe I rode as if in all the district of Williamsburg there was not an enemy, and the good God allowed me to pass through that Tory infested district in safety.

It was no more than two hours past noon when I came upon the advance guard of our brigade, and five minutes later stood before my uncle and General Marion, shaking like one in an ague fit.

Those brave soldiers needed not to be told that some disaster had befallen us. The fact, although not the story, was imprinted plainly on my face, and Major James dismounted that he might fling his arm around my shoulders, as he asked softly and tenderly :

“ How far beyond here did you leave Percy and Gavin Witherspoon ? ”

“ Within three miles of Dubose Ferry, so nearly as I can say. ”

“ Were you come upon Barfield’s force before this thing happened ? ”

Then it was that I found my tongue, and told him all the sad story, taking good care however, that both he and the general understood full well the strength of the enemy as we had found them.

“ We will fall upon them as soon as may

be," the general cried, and beckoning to Captain Mouzon he would have given some order but that I said hurriedly, forgetting my manners, as well I might, after all that had happened :

"Gavin Witherspoon declared that Major Gainey's men would join Barfield's force, and should the Williamsburg brigade advance, it would be only to their capture or death."

"Death is what every soldier must expect, and peradventure it be delayed until the end comes peacefully, then is he less fortunate, perhaps, than his fellow. We will ride on, gentlemen, and attack Barfield as soon as we can come upon him."

CHAPTER V.

THE AMBUSH.

HAD the men composing the brigade all been akin to me they could not have shown greater kindness, nor done more to soothe my grief, than they did during the brief time before the march toward the Tory encampment was really commenced.

One found immediately a better steed ; another brought assurances from Captain Mouzon that I was not to think for a single instant of the loss of his horses, since it was only the fortunes of war, which must be expected. A third would have pressed food upon me ; but I could not have swallowed a single morsel unless, perchance, life itself might have depended upon the act.

My uncle, Major James, said very little

after hearing the story we had gotten from Sam Lee.

At first I attributed his silence to the apprehensions which had come upon him with the knowledge that General Gates had been overwhelmed ; but later I had good reason to believe it arose solely from anxiety concerning my brother.

“ You shall ride by my side, lad, until we have settled this affair, and when it is done neither you nor I will have cause to reproach ourselves for not having ventured enough.”

Such a promise from such a man was sufficient to tell me that while he and I remained alive, we would struggle as men do who have no fear of death, until the dear lad was rescued, or we borne down by press of numbers.

At this day it seems singular to me that I heard no one speak of the great disaster which had come upon the colonists at Camden.

I can only explain it by the supposition

that each man saw in the adventure before us an opportunity to do somewhat by way of retaliation, and set all his thoughts on that purpose.

We were halted, after my rejoining the brigade, twenty minutes or more, and then the word to advance was given; but not in such fashion as I had supposed from what General Marion said, on his learning of the disaster which had come upon Percy.

My idea was, and in my ignorance I saw no other method of procedure, that the little troop would ride into Barfield's Tories even as they had among those commanded by Major Gainey, and that we should profit by the surprise.

This could not be done, as I afterward came to realize.

The capture of Percy, and what Sam Lee could tell, would be sufficient to prevent us from coming upon them unexpectedly.

When the Tory lad should inform the commander that two of Major James'

nephews were in that vicinity, it would be immediately known that our uncle, with a goodly following, was somewhere near-about.

The Tories would be prepared, and those who had suffered defeat that morning must have, by this time, a very good idea of our strength.

General Marion, as I afterward came to know full well, was not the man to neglect any precaution, and while he counted on making an attack despite the difference in numbers, it was his intention to do so in such manner as would come nearest to guaranteeing success.

Fifty of the best mounted men were detached and sent straight toward Dubose Ferry, while the remainder of the brigade rode off at right angles, in such direction as would bring us to the timber lands eastward of the road leading to Indian Village.

It was this last portion of the force which my uncle and I accompanied, and I, sur-

prised that a part of the brigade rode at full speed, while we loitered, as it were, asked the reason.

“Those in advance are mounted in such fashion that they may easily outrun the enemy, and it is the plan that they appear before Barfield’s force as if intending to make an attack,” my uncle replied. “After thus showing themselves the squad will beat a retreat, causing it to appear as if they were surprised by seeing so large a force. Then, unless the Tories are quicker witted than I give them credit for being, a goodly portion of the band will be led into ambush.”

It was the Indian’s favorite method of warfare, and, cruel though I had ever considered it, at this moment it gave me most intense pleasure.

I had said to myself that we could hope to do little less than die in the vain attempt to rescue Percy; but now it seemed as if, should our lives be demanded as a sacrifice, we might sell them dearly.

Well, all went as our commander had counted upon.

We hid ourselves in the thicket either side the road, three hundred and fifty horsemen, with not a man dismounted, for we counted upon riding the Tories down when they should retreat after the first volley had warned them that they had been led into a trap.

There we waited upwards of an hour, no man venturing to so much as speak, and each looking well after his steed lest one of the animals whinny at the supreme moment, thus giving the enemy a clew, before they were fairly within our grasp, of what awaited them.

During that hour I resolutely kept my thoughts on trifles, such as caring for the animal I bestrode, making certain I was in such position that it would be possible to get out of the wood with the least possible delay when the enemy was thrown into confusion, and by these and other means prevented myself from dwelling upon Percy's fate.

Then came that sound for which we had waited—the thunder of horses' feet upon the beaten road.

We heard cries of fear, which were uttered by our decoys to entice the Tories into yet hotter pursuit, and far in the distance could be distinguished the crack of rifles and the rattle of muskets.

At that time, with the blood literally boiling in my veins and my heart beating like the blows of a hammer, I never stopped to question how many of ours might be killed in this attempt to deal out punishment to the enemies of the colonies ; but realized only that now was come the moment when I could strike a blow in defense of my brother.

Nearer and nearer came the horsemen, until through the trees we saw the Williamsburg men riding madly down, not a saddle emptied, and before one could count twenty the advance of the Tories came in sight.

A whispered word went around among

us to "hold ready," although every man was on the alert, and when the road in front of us appeared to be one dense mass of horses, and men wearing red uniforms, my uncle gave the signal for which we waited :

"Fire, boys, and at them !"

From each side the road rang out reports of rifles which had been leveled in deadly aim, for at such short range each could pick his man and make certain of bringing him down.

Instantly the ranks were broken ; the redcoated horsemen reined in their steeds as the squad they had been pursuing halted and fired their volley, and then came a scramble and retreat when we dashed among them.

Twice I loaded and discharged my rifle, and then it seemed to me as if such work was all too slow.

Using the weapon as a club, I rode by my uncle's side into the very midst of that scrambling, terrified mass of human beings,

and cried aloud with savage joy when I struck one of the frightened villains down.

As was afterward learned, there were no less than one thousand men who had set out in pursuit of our decoys, and yet after our first attack not one of them remained to hold us in check.

Had they been only so many sheep, we could not have found them easier prey.

The major, my uncle, had said I should ride by his side, and so I did, down the road at the heels of the Tory scoundrels, ever as we had done the night previous. Then on, and on, striking down a foe here and there until we were come, nearly the whole brigade, into that encampment which Gavin Witherspoon and I had looked upon, believing it could not be taken by such a force as ours.

Out of all those scoundrels who had so lately held the place, believing that those true to the Cause had been virtually crushed by the defeat of General Gates,

only two men came forth to meet us, and those two, my brother and Gavin Wither-spoon.

Is there any need I should say how warm was the greeting between us two lads when I threw myself from the horse and clasped to my heart the dear boy whom I had thought never to see again in this life?

It needed no more than an hundred words for him to tell his story.

While he remained in the thicket guarding Sam Lee a body of men, who had lately served under Major Gainey, came upon them by chance, and, as a matter of course, he was at once taken prisoner, Sam Lee immediately telling the story of his own capture.

Then it was the Tory Sam who became the jailer, and Percy the prisoner.

My brother was conducted to Barfield's camp, and there kept under guard of Sam, who did all that lay in his power, save by way of personal violence, to pay off old scores.

Gavin Witherspoon, wily as an Indian, had crept up to the very edge of the encampment, and was lying there in the vain hope that some opportunity would come for the rescue, when our force, sent as a decoy, appeared.

An hundred or more men were left to guard the encampment, and Gavin hoped the moment had come when he might be of service to the lad.

Believing that the Tories would be victorious in the chase, because of superior numbers, he ventured too near Percy, and was himself captured.

An hour later the first of the terrified fugitives burst into the encampment, riding straight through it in their wild terror, thus causing a panic among the guard who might even then, because of their intrenched position, have held us in check.

In a twinkling Percy and Gavin were free; but in imminent danger of being ridden down by the panic-stricken.

Crouching behind trees, or at the stronger

portions of the intrenchments, they awaited our coming, and when we rode into camp came forth to greet us as I have said.

Our force remained in the captured quarters until next morning, and during the evening Gavin Witherspoon, Percy and myself had much to talk about.

My brother and I were come by this time to look upon the old man as a comrade, and well we might, after the friend he had proven himself to be.

While we talked only concerning ourselves, and looked after our own welfare, General Marion and the officers of the command spent the time discussing how it might be possible for so small a force to uphold the cause in the Carolinas, for since the defeat of Gates ours was the only body of men in the colony to oppose the foe.

It was as if the king's troops had indeed crushed what they were pleased to term "rebellion," and more than one man in the brigade whose fidelity to the Cause could

not be questioned, asked his comrade if it were wise to longer remain in arms when we were virtually whipped.

The outlook was gloomy indeed for those who had hoped to be freed from the burdens the king had put upon them ; but, fortunately for the Cause, General Marion and Major James were not the men to give in beaten so long as life remained.

Even while some among us were making ready to say openly that the time had come when we must submit, those two gallant gentlemen were planning for the future—planning as to how four hundred or less might best oppose ten times their number of trained soldiers.

Gavin Witherspoon, Percy and myself, while listening to the faint-hearted ones or discussing the situation between ourselves, hoped that the general would call upon us for some especial mission, even as he had when we were sent to spy out Barfield's camp ; but the time was not come when we were needed for a venture of any

moment, as we learned an hour before daybreak next morning.

Then the men were aroused with orders to breakfast from the Tories' provisions as hurriedly as might be, and make ready for the forced march.

Among those with whom I talked, when in the gray light we made our preparations for the march, not a man believed there was the slightest question we should continue upon the offensive.

All understood that we could not in safety remain much longer in the Tory camp, for unless those whom we had routed were greater cowards than was generally believed, they would soon recover from the panic into which we had driven them, and return to make an attack.

Therefore it was that we set out believing the move was made simply for the purpose of changing quarters, and when orders were given that each man take from the Tory stores so much of provisions for himself, or provender for his horse as could be

carried conveniently behind him, we fancied it was the general's purpose to so outfit the brigade that it might lay in hiding two or three days without being forced to venture forth in search of food.

Before noon came, however, all understood that some maneuver was in progress.

Instead of riding rapidly, as would have been the case had we counted on simply exchanging one encampment for another, we went forward at a leisurely pace, making no halt until the sun was high in the heavens, when we were come to the ford on Black River, half a dozen miles or more south of Kingstree.

Then the men and horses were allowed a rest of an hour, after which we bore nearly due west until we struck the road leading from Georgetown to Nelson's Ferry, and the word was whispered from man to man that the commander had it in mind to strike yet another blow at the red-coated enemy before we laid down our arms.

It is well known, as a matter of course, that the "war-path" from Charleston to Camden crosses Santee River at Nelson's Ferry, and here, above all other places, would one who was eager for fighting be likely to get his fill.

More than once during the day had we learned from planters, who were true to the Cause, additional particulars concerning the blunder of General Gates, and before nightfall we understood beyond a peradventure that the story told by Sam Lee was only untrue in so far as it did not contain all the disasters which had befallen the American arms.

Now we knew how many prisoners had been taken, and, what was more to the purpose, learned that our unfortunate countrymen were being sent as rapidly as possible from the scene of the one-sided conflict to Charleston.

It was an hour before sunset, and we were holding the same pace at which we started, with no evidence of going into

camp, when Gavin Witherspoon said bitterly, as if the thought had just seized him :

“Lads, if it so be you have any curiosity concerning this long march of ours, during which we have traversed the Williamsburg district apparently for no other purpose than to come upon an enemy who may crush us with but little trouble, I can satisfy you.”

“Have you been getting some special information?” Percy asked with a laugh.

“Aye, lad, that I have, and you may count upon its being true, although I got it only from my own head.”

“Then you are guessing as to where we are going?” I said with no great show of enthusiasm, for I was weary to the verge of exhaustion with long remaining in the saddle.

“It is more than guessing, lad. It is what has been learned from observation, and that is the most reliable information a man can obtain. We are heading for Nelson’s Ferry.”

“If that is all your observation has taught you, it would seem as if much time had been wasted,” Percy replied laughingly. “Every man in the brigade has known as much since noon.”

“True, lad, but that is not the sum of the information I am willing to give. It has been told us that the American prisoners which Lord Cornwallis took are being sent to Charleston as rapidly as possible, and you will admit with me that all must pass through this same place toward which we are bound. It is General Marion’s purpose to strike another blow, if no more, at the enemy, and in so doing set free some of those who were made prisoners through their general’s stupidity.”

There was much of sound common sense in Gavin Witherspoon’s reasoning, and straightway the truth of it came into my mind, all sense of fatigue was lost sight of in the relief which was mine at knowing we would not yet submit to the Britishers,

even though it seemed as if we were already driven to the last extremity.

A moment before the old man gave words to his thoughts, I would have said that both the animal I bestrode and myself were so near to exhaustion that we could not hold the pace an hour longer ; but now it was as if I had enjoyed a long time of repose, and action was absolutely necessary, lest I grow rusty with much idleness.

'We three discussed the possibility of the future as if all Gavin Witherspoon had suggested was known to be true, until one of the general's aides came riding down the line, drawing rein in front of us, as he said curtly:

“The general would speak with you.”

“We have not been forgotten,” Percy cried gleefully, “and now has come our time to render some immediate service.”

“Or fall into the hands of the enemy,” Gavin Witherspoon added with a smile. “These special missions are not the safest, and sometimes he who sets out on them

with the idea of making his name famous, comes to grief."

"As I did yesterday," Percy replied, still laughing. "When I have as comrades you and Bob, it matters little how much of unpleasant adventure I see, save for the discomfort of the moment."

Then the dear lad spurred his horse onward, and we two followed, Gavin Wither- spoon wearing a serious countenance, while I was in much perplexity as to whether two lads like Percy and myself should be trusted with work such as old soldiers oftentimes fail at doing successfully.

Arriving at the head of the line we found the general and Major James riding side by side.

Both returned our salute, but neither slackened speed, and we rode alongside of the general, Percy and I, while Gavin remained slightly in the rear.

"We should be within twenty miles of Nelson's Ferry," the commander said, speaking as if we were eager for such

information. "It is certain that portions of Cornwallis's force guarding American prisoners will pass there from time to time within the next eight and forty hours. It is my desire that we have early information of such coming and going, and to that end I have sent for you, lads."

He paused for an instant as if debating in his mind what to say next, and Gavin Witherspoon rode up that he might attract the general's attention, when the latter said with a smile :

"I am speaking to you two lads and the old man who is so eager to participate in venturesome missions. Any force coming from Camden will halt over night, at least, nearabout the Ferry. By riding up the river ten miles or more you should be able to give me timely information of their coming. Within an hour we shall halt, and then it is you who must push forward so far as the animals can go. Continue on until having come to a point ten or twelve miles above the Ferry. There remain, in

whatsoever fashion may please you, until you hear of the enemy's approach. Then wait only so long as may be necessary to learn how strong he is in numbers, after which you will ride without delay to Taw Caw Creek, on the bank of which we shall be encamped."

Having said this he saluted, as did my uncle, and we three, understanding that this was the signal for dismissal, reined in our steeds until we were fallen back to our proper place in the line.

The knowledge that we were to perform some especial work which bid fair to be of service to the Cause, heartened us wonderfully, and indeed we had need of something to raise our courage, for much talking about the disasters which had overtaken the American troops caused it to seem as if the so-called rebellion was well-nigh come to an end.

"It may be our last chance of striking a blow at those who represent the king, lads," Gavin Witherspoon said cheerily.

“Mayhap we shall be fortunate if a British bullet finds lodgment in our bodies with sufficient force to wipe us out of existence, for such a death as that is preferable to hanging, and that is what awaits us of Williamsburg who defy his majesty, after my Lord Clinton’s second proclamation.”

“It is a doleful way you have of preparing one for venturesome work,” Percy said, with a laugh which told that he claimed little share in these forebodings. “If to be shot is good fortune, then we may rejoice, for I doubt not but that there are hundreds of the king’s servants who will readily grant such a favor.”

“I am not minded to dishearten you,” Gavin said in a kindly tone; “but the straits into which the Cause has fallen are so sore and desperate now, that to an old man like me who has ventured all, it would seem as if a soldier’s death, coming before the last blow to the colonies had been struck, was a kindly thing. However, we are like to go ten miles above Nelson’s

Ferry and back, without falling into more harm than was brought about by the capture of Sam Lee, and I venture to say we shall report in proper form and due time such information as the general desires."

Then we fell silent, each intent on his own thoughts, and at that moment I was thinking far more of my mother than of the Cause, for Gavin Witherspoon's words had depressed me until it began to appear as if I might never see her dear face again.

From this pleasant but yet painful reverie I was roused by the halting of the command, and Percy said, seizing me by the arm as if believing I had fallen asleep :

"The time has come for us to push forward alone, Bob, and we must make as many miles 'twixt now and dark as can be forced out of these jaded steeds."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRISONERS.

GIVING no heed to those around us, we continued on when the command was halted, much as if we had not heard the orders, and without anything in the way of leave-taking.

I know not how it may have been with my companions; but as for myself, I was in no mood to speak even with my uncle, so thickly did the sad and gloomy thoughts flow through my mind. It was to me as if we were playing the last acts in that drama which should have had a glorious ending—as if we were assisting at the death of the Cause, and I believe that nine out of every ten men in the brigade had some such thought as myself.

It was true that we might strike a blow at Nelson's Ferry, but let the reader re-

member that ours, was probably the only armed force, true to the colonies, then in the Carolinas; let him remember that the Britishers overran our land, even as did the locusts of old, and how might four hundred men or less oppose all the soldiers the king could send against us?

Surely for us of the southern colonies, this night, when we three set out to spy upon the victorious troops coming down from Camden with our friends as prisoners, was the worst ever known.

We were beaten—hemmed in, and, like rats in the corner, could only make one desperate fight, not against death, but simply as proof that our courage held good even to the very last moment.

Let all these things be borne well in mind, and it is little wonder that when we rode on after the command was halted, we were in no mood for leave-taking. Ours might, and it seemed probable it would, be the last blow in a gallant struggle for liberty.

When we passed the group of officers at the head of the column, all sitting their horses motionless as statues, looking neither to the right nor the left, but each man as it were peering into the recesses of his own heart, asking himself in what way the end would come, I gave one glance toward my uncle, and it seemed to me as if there was a certain uplifting of the eyebrows which I interpreted as a "good-by."

More than that we saw not, and five minutes later the brigade of Williamsburg patriots, tried and true, were left behind, while we two lads and the old man rode forward, hoping almost against hope that it might be possible we should accomplish something toward showing the British king how strong in our hearts was the desire for liberty.

Our horses, jaded by the long march of the day, were unwilling to leave the troop; they went forward listlessly, and we had not the heart to spur them on because it

was much as if they shared our feelings.

I question if we gained ten miles in advance of the column that night.

Certain it is we were not yet come within the vicinity of Nelson's Ferry when Gavin Witherspoon's horse stopped short, and the old man said as he dismounted slowly :

“ We may as well rest here for the night, as a mile or two further on. I propose that we halt until a couple of hours before sunrise, and by so doing we shall gain time.”

After the experience we had had with the old man, Percy and I were more than willing to follow his advice, and we set about making ourselves as comfortable as might be under all the circumstances.

A better place for camping could not be found. A tiny brook running through a grove of pines, where the underbrush was so dense as to form ample hiding-place, as well as a shelter from the dews of the night. There was little green feed for the

horses ; but we carried a goodly store of grain on our saddles, and, heedless of the possible necessities of the future which seemed so dark, we allowed the tired steeds to eat their pleasure from the store.

Such food as we had, and as I have said was taken from the Tory camp, we ate, and then, lame and sore in every joint from the long hours in the saddle, we laid ourselves down for perchance the last sleep on this earth.

My eyes were closed in slumber within two or three minutes after I was thus stretched at full length upon the bed of pine needles, and it seemed as if I had slept several hours when something—I know not what—awakened me.

There was no movement, and the faint light of the stars did not penetrate the thicket ; yet I could see that the horses were lying down ; that my comrades were wrapped in slumber, and it puzzled me to make out why I was thus wakeful.

Then, partially turning my head, for no

other reason than to make a change of position, I saw what appeared to be the reflection of a camp-fire through the underbrush.

When one knows that he is surrounded by enemies, the lightest thing out of the ordinary arouses his suspicions, and although this gleam of light was so faint that at another time I would have given no heed to it, now it seemed absolutely necessary I should understand the cause.

It would be foolish to awaken my comrades, so I argued, when there might be no good reason, and I crept out through the bushes softly until, having traversed a distance of fifty yards or more, when I saw that we were not the only ones who had utilized this thicket as a camp.

Four men sat around a small fire eating, and near by were tethered their horses.

It was fortunate our steeds were so leg-weary, else when this party drove up they might have given the alarm, for I doubted not but that these were enemies. At such

time in the history of the so-called rebellion we had so few friends as to be able to say with a certainty where they were.

It was in my mind to return at once and arouse Gavin Witherspoon and Percy, that we might make our escape; but all was so quiet, and these four apparently unsuspecting that any save themselves were in the vicinity, that I delayed carrying out the purpose in my mind, until, having almost unconsciously approached a few yards nearer, I recognized in one of them, that Tory villain, Sam Lee.

Once this discovery was made I no longer thought of returning to where I had left my comrades; but wriggled along yet nearer, and was well repaid for the delay.

It would seem as if the men had been questioning young Lee as to his ability to do something which had been promised, for one of them was saying when I came within earshot:

“It is a blind chase to push ahead in search of a party of rebels who by this

time may have returned home, hoping to keep secret the part they have been playing."

To this Sam Lee replied hotly, much as if the honor of the James family were in his keeping :

"The major will never go home alive so long as one other can be found to remain with him, and there are many of his kin in Williamsburg."

"But what reason have we for believing you can lead us to them?"

"Because I know of their haunts," the scoundrel said, as if he was telling the truth. "So far all they have accomplished has been by surprising our people who are not soldiers; but I guarantee that you men of the Prince of Wales' regiment will make a different showing among them."

"Of that I have no question; but these people, knowing fully the country, can easily disperse between the time we come upon them, and word has been sent to the command. Then again, we must trust to

your finding them, which I misdoubt greatly, else are you a keener lad than I have seen in the Carolinas."

It was the eldest of the three men who said this, and as he moved slightly I saw that his uniform, which I knew full well, was that of the Prince of Wales' regiment, to which organization Sam Lee had referred.

"You may do as you please," the young Troy said angrily. "I have told the colonel that I could lead you to where the scarecrow Marion was encamped and put you on their trail wheresoever the forces might be going; but if, now that we are hardly more than started, you choose to turn back, it is none of my affair, I have done my part."

No reply was made to this, and for a time the men were silent, while I, speculating as to what might be their purpose, believed it was a simple matter to guess why they were there.

We knew full well that Sam Lee had been

in Captain Barfield's encampment, and, like the coward that he was, fled when our troops came up. He also must have ridden all day in order to gain Nelson's Ferry ; had most likely met this regiment of the king's, and claimed ability to deliver our people into their hands. It seemed also true that these troopers had ridden in advance of the command, as had we three, and we were thus come together at a place midway between the Britishers and our own force.

Up to this point I had no difficulty in forming a satisfactory conclusion ; but beyond that I was all at sea, and naturally thought the proper course was to return and give information to Gavin Wither-
spoon.

In fact I was in the act of turning when one of the soldiers said grumblingly :

“ Even though the rebels may be where this lad has stated, I fail to see why we should have left the camp and ridden half a dozen miles in advance. What good can be gained by spending the night here,

when we might have done so with our comrades?"

"For my part," the third trooper added, "I would rather sleep here than do my share of guarding an hundred or more scurvy rebels. Had we stayed in camp some portion of the duty would have come upon us, whereas we may lie down under these bushes and sleep until it pleases us to open our eyes next morning."

"That is all very true," the first speaker replied; "yet there were good quarters to be found at Nelson's Ferry, and here a bed upon the ground is the best to be had."

It was almost with difficulty that I suppressed a cry of triumph, for now I had the full story, and we might return with the information desired by General Marion before having fairly set out to do the work.

The British force, comprised in whole or in part of the Prince of Wales' regiment, and guarding an hundred or more of our people, captured when General Gates was

defeated, were encamped at Nelson's Ferry, six or seven miles away. These fellows, through information given by Sam Lee, were coming out in search of us, and would not leave their halting-place until sunrise.

It was a lucky chance which led us to this spot, and the forebodings which had weighed heavily upon me a few hours previous, were lightened wonderfully by the thought that fortune, which had borne so hardly upon us in the past, was about taking a turn in our favor.

I lost no time in returning at once to my comrades, although forced to do so slowly lest I make so much of noise that the Tory and his red-coated companions be warned of our nearness.

Then, having arrived by the side of Percy and Gavin Witherspoon, I pressed both hands upon their mouths to prevent any cry in their awakening.

The old man's grasp upon my arm told that he was fully alive to the situation,

and I repeated as quickly as might be all that had been heard.

Sitting bolt upright as if any future movement depended wholly upon me, he said in a whisper :

“Whether the horses can cover sixteen or twenty miles after a long day’s work, is a question.”

“But one which you should not ask,” Percy added in a more serious tone than I had ever heard him employ. “We have gained the information for which we were sent, and it must be carried back to camp without delay.”

“I grant you that, lad ; but was only asking myself whether it might be possible for our people to take advantage of it.”

“Such speculations can be deferred until we have spoken with General Marion,” Percy replied as he arose, and after that there was no discussion among us.

To get the horses on their feet without making a noise was no slight task ; but

we accomplished it after a certain fashion, and led them out of the thicket, not mounting until we were fully two miles away.

After that our progress was no more rapid than if we had remained on foot, for it seemed impossible to urge the animals at a pace faster than a walk, and it appeared to me as if the morning must be near at hand when we were finally come to the encampment.

All our men were not given over to slumber, as was shown by our being challenged before yet we knew how near to us was the military force, and five minutes later we were standing beside our uncle, who, suddenly aroused from his sleep, asked with a note of alarm in his tones :

“What disaster has befallen you?”

We soon gave him to understand that fortune had played us a good turn, and immediately the information was given he became animated.

One would have said he had never known

fatigue, to have seen him as he ran toward where General Marion was sleeping, and, shaking the officer into wakefulness, he repeated in a few words our story.

I had supposed the news we brought would cause some sensation in the camp; but never believed it would be acted upon so quickly.

Within fifteen minutes from the time of our being challenged by the sentinel, every man was in the saddle, and Percy, Gavin Witherspoon and myself were riding at the head of the column by my uncle's side, in order that we might point out the place where the soldiers and Sam Lee were encamped.

We now learned that it was midnight; the tired men and their horses had had six hours of rest, and although the advance was not rapid, we pressed forward with greater speed than I had believed possible, our own steeds seeming to be revived by the companionship of the others.

Now I am come to that point in this

story concerning which I can say but little of my own knowledge, for certain it is that I fell asleep even while in the saddle, and was not conscious of anything until the halting of my horse nearly threw me over his head.

We had arrived within two miles of Nelson's Ferry, and it was yet night. Unless some unfortunate accident occurred at the last moment, there was an opportunity of our soon learning whether the British regulars would hold firm under such a surprise as we should be able to give them.

The purpose of the halt was not to reconnoiter, as I had at first supposed, but in order that a squad of twenty might be detached to gain possession of the road in the swamp at that post known as Horse Creek, while we were to attack the main body in the rear.

The scouts who had been sent ahead half an hour before my awakening, came back reporting that the enemy were en-

camped on the east bank of the creek, which was another and a great point in our favor.

Once more would General Marion have a chance to execute his favorite maneuver, the only one by which we could hope to win while the odds were so heavily against us.

Twenty minutes or more were spent here waiting for the detachment to get into position at Horse Creek, and then the advance was resumed, this time at a slow pace lest the thud of our horses' feet upon the road should give an alarm.

Despite the fact that I knew full well we would soon be engaged in deadly encounter, slumber weighed heavily upon my eyelids, and it was with difficulty I could prevent them from closing.

Rather like one in a dream, than a lad who burned to give his life for the Cause, did I hold myself in the saddle, and it seemed as if no more than ten minutes had passed when we were halted again,

this time so near the enemy that the gleam of his camp-fires could be seen.

The moment for reflection had come.

General Marion's force was about to be hurled upon the best men in the king's army. We who knew little or nothing of military tactics, we who were mounted upon jaded steeds, and half dead for lack of sleep, were about to charge a camp of well armed men, most likely in the best possible condition, and if the end for us of the southern colonies was near, it seemed as if this was indeed the last moment.

"At full speed, and do not fire until we are close upon them!" was the whispered word passed from man to man, and I saw those either side of me carefully charging their rifles or muskets.

Even though we were come upon the Prince of Wales' regiment and a portion of the 63d Regulars, as was afterward learned, the result was much the same as when we rode down upon the undisciplined Tories.

There was the onward leaping of the horses as the spurs were sunk deep in their flanks ; the thunder of their hoofs ; the cries of the enemy as they were awakened from their slumbers ; our shouts of triumph ; the crackle of musketry and the groans of the wounded.

It was a dream—a horrible nightmare rather than a reality, and had I been a spectator instead of a participant, it would have seemed no different.

At such times the excitement of the battle is full upon one, and I have yet to see man or boy who can give a clear and detailed account of all that occurred while the scent of the powder was in his nostrils.

This much I do know, that, as twice before, I loaded and discharged my musket, or used it as a club ; that I forced my horse to keep pace with my uncle's steed, who was ever foremost in the fray, and then the fleeing mass told that the enemy were in retreat.

This victory, when the majority of our men had believed the attack would prove our final ending, did more to revive the drooping spirits of General Marion's force than anything else could have done.

We forgot weariness ; forgot everything save the fact that we of Williamsburg had been pitted against the king's best soldiers, and were come out of the battle as well as when we met Major Gainey's or Barfield's men.

On this occasion, however, we did not press the pursuit. It was known that these soldiers would re-form, where raw recruits might continue panic-stricken, and we were not so strong in numbers as to risk a regular engagement.

My uncle was the foremost here, as he ever had been, and Percy and I remained by his side, therefore can I say of a verity that we did not ride after the retreating column more than half a mile ; but, once well clear of the encampment, drew rein and turned about.

It was now near to daylight, and we soon learned that we had captured or killed twenty-two regulars, among whom was a captain, and held two Tories as prisoners.

Our loss was one killed and one wounded.

In addition to having thus gained a victory over the best of his majesty's soldiers in the colonies, we had recaptured one hundred and fifty men, and it is not necessary to say how much of rejoicing there was in our lines when the sun rose.

Now am I come to the shameful part of the story, and one which will be most difficult of belief.

To Percy and I it seemed that with this successful attack, by liberating one hundred and fifty men who were supposed to be friends to the Cause, because of wearing the Continental uniform, we had added just so much to General Marion's strength, and neither of us had any question but that every one of them would gladly join our force.

As we two believed, so did all our comrades as well as the officers who led us, for after the first rejoicings were over those who had been prisoners were ordered into line, and Major James proposed, with the air of one who thinks he makes what will be accepted without question, that they enroll themselves among us of Williamsburg until such time as we could fight our way through the district to where others who loved the Cause might be found.

To the shame of these Continental soldiers it must be set down that out of that number freed by us at risk of our lives, only three consented to serve under the general.

Some said that the "Cause was lost;" others declared that to fight longer was "simply to risk one's life without an object, because the king's troops overrun the country, and after the defeat of Gates there was no longer the slightest chance we could hold our own many days."

When no more than these three stepped forward from the ranks in response to his

proposal, and the others talked loudly among themselves, or with our men, my uncle turned away like one who is stricken with a deadly wound.

Then Percy and I made our way among these men who wore the buff and the blue, to hear further reasons as to why they had acted such a cowardly part.

It was a captain, one who should have been the first to urge his men to enlist, who said in reply to my questions :

“Surely the Cause has none in the Carolinas, save this beggarly force to which you are attached, while the British have overrun this section of the country. The Continentals are dispersed or captured ; the Virginia and North Carolina militia are scattered to the four winds ; Sumter’s Legion has been whipped by Tarleton, and their leader is fleeing for his life. In addition to all that, here is a copy of the letter which Lord Clinton has sent to the commandants of the different posts throughout the colonies.”

Then the officer handed me a slip of paper on which was written the following :

“I have given orders that all of the inhabitants of this province who have subscribed, and have taken part in this revolt, should be punished with the greatest rigor ; and also those who will not turn out, that they may be imprisoned and their whole property taken from them or destroyed. . . . I have ordered in the most positive manner that every militiaman, who has borne arms with us, and afterwards joined the enemy, shall be immediately hanged !”

CHAPTER VII.

THE RETREAT.

WE of Williamsburg were most certainly in a peculiar position, after having released one hundred and fifty prisoners and discovered that only three had sufficient faith in the Cause, or were sufficiently eager for death, to join us.

Now right here let me set down that the men under General Marion were true patriots, gentlemen of the Williamsburg district, and in every sense of the word, worthy citizens. This I say because the British people even at this late day, five years since peace was declared and we have become a free and independent people, say that "that officer who caused Tarleton so much annoyance had as a following only the dissolute and depraved."

I repeat, the force under General Marion was made up of gentlemen, the greater number of whom owned plantations in or near the Williamsburg district, and the fact that they had for a leader such a man as my uncle, Major James, is sufficient proof as to their character. ■

Although these men were by this time come to believe that the Cause for which they had struggled so long was much the same as lost, so far as we in the southern colonies were concerned, yet they were not of the class that acknowledges itself beaten while life remains.

Therefore it was, that instead of being yet further disheartened by this failure which followed a brilliant victory, they were the more determined to strike every possible blow before the end should come.

The cruel and barbarous proclamation of Lord Clinton aroused their anger rather than fear, and within half an hour after it had been circulated among us, I heard my uncle, the major, say that no document

could have been put in a style better calculated to drive recruits into our ranks than that which was written evidently for the purpose of frightening the colony into submission.

There is, perhaps, a good word to be spoken for those men, who, having been released from captivity by us, were willing to serve under General Marion.

They had been whipped at the very moment victory seemed certain, and it is little wonder that the faint-hearted should have begun to despair, when, after four years of desperate struggling, the "rebellion" was well-nigh crushed out.

At the moment, we of Williamsburg could have no sympathy for such cowards, as we called them, and had any of the men begged us for food I question if we would have supplied their wants, so angered were we by the refusal to enlist.

It was evident to every man among us that it was not safe to remain on this road over which the British soldiers were con-

tinually passing, and particularly since those whom we had defeated would speedily give information to all the king's officers in the colony.

From this hour our little brigade would be hunted down without mercy, and there could be no question but that the chase would be a lively one since the Britishers in this section had no other "rebels" with whom to occupy their attention.

Therefore it was that every man in the command felt a certain sense of relief, when, after a halt of no more than four hours, word was given to remount the tired horses.

We rode four hours or more, and then were come to the forest round about Hope Mountain, when the word was given that we would have an opportunity to indulge in a long rest.

During this march it can well be imagined that Gavin Witherspoon, Percy and myself kept a sharp lookout for Sam Lee. The greatest desire in my heart at that moment

was to make a prisoner of the young Tory, for he, knowing well every man in the brigade, would be able to give the Britishers many valuable hints regarding our probable whereabouts, and so long as he remained at liberty we had a dangerous enemy afoot, even though that enemy was a coward.

Every man, including officers, brought away with him from this last encounter a goodly store of provisions, and there was no fear of suffering from lack of food, even though we remained a week in this encampment at the foot of the mountain.

The days were passed in perfect idleness, save so far as the grooming of our horses was concerned, and, although not a trooper left the camp, we were kept well informed regarding the movements of the enemy, by such of the people round about as were friendly to the Cause.

Therefore it was that we heard sad news from Camden when the humane and chivalrous Lord Cornwallis hanged eight old

men and seven boys, prisoners whom he had taken after the battle, simply because there was a suspicion that they might have been concerned in the so-called rebellion.

Nor was this wholesale murder the only crime committed by the conquerors in the Carolinas during the week we remained idle.

From every quarter came stories of barbarity and excesses committed by British officers, and that which seemed like a great misfortune soon proved, despite the horror, to be a blessing in disguise, for it drove into our ranks every man from the surrounding country who had ever been charged, whether rightfully or no, with taking any part whatsoever in the resistance to the king's oppressions.

Within six days there were enrolled among the followers of General Marion no less than seven hundred and fifty good men and true ; but it is not to be supposed that such number remained in camp.

In fact, although the brigade was being strengthened daily, the force under arms was decreasing, and for two good reasons : First, because such a body could not readily be supplied with provisions, and secondly, because the majority of these troopers were men of families, who, during this season of inactivity, took advantage of the opportunity to provide for the wants of those at home.

No more than one hundred and fifty remained in the camp at Hope Mountain ; but the others stood ready to respond to the first summons that their service was needed.

It was late in the evening of the eighth day, when one on whose fidelity to the Cause we could rely, came into camp with the information that Tarleton's Legion and a strong force under Major Wemyss, had been sent by Lord Cornwallis against us.

Although his lordship had affected to despise General Marion, he certainly acted as if he believed our commander a gal-

lant officer, otherwise why were the 63d Regulars and the Legion of Tarleton sent against what the Britishers had contemptuously termed "that beggarly crew."

Before morning other friends came into camp, and we knew that the two forces were not as yet united; but Major Wemyss with the 63d Regulars, and a large body of Tories under Major Harrison, were advancing rapidly toward Hope Mountain, information of our whereabouts having been given, perhaps, by that young scoundrel, Sam Lee, who I doubted not was doing his best to work us harm.

Although there was much in this information to dishearten, I believe every member of our small band felt a certain sense of satisfaction that the time for action was near at hand. None of us had doubted but that we should be employed against the enemy in some manner, despite the great difference in numbers.

Gavin Witherspoon, Percy and I were so fortunate as to be among the fifty selected

to reconnoiter, and when we saddled our horses, which were in prime condition after their long halt, there was a certain sense of exultation in our hearts, even though it seemed absolutely certain we could effect nothing so far as the welfare of the Cause was concerned.

It is not my purpose to write at any length regarding the adventure which befell us, for among the many deeds of daring which the followers of General Marion were given liberty to perform, this incident would seem to one who did not take part in it, as something too trifling to be worthy of mention.

Therefore will I tell it hurriedly, and in the fewest words, in order the sooner to come to that time of sorrow and humiliation when we began the retreat from the lower Carolinas.

We, fifty picked men, and I speak of Percy and myself as such although we were only boys, set out near to noon on the reconnoiter, understanding that the re-

mainder of the force led by General Marion would follow fifteen or twenty miles in the rear in order to be ready, if opportunity presented itself, to fall upon the detached bands of Major Wemyss' command.

It was known, however, that the general would halt at the old Sinclair plantation, if it so chanced that the venture should lead us thus far.

Until nightfall we rode straight on, and then we were met by those who told us that the advance guard of the enemy was near at hand.

The command was immediately given for each man to conceal himself in the thicket either side the road, where a view could be had of the enemy as they passed, and in such position we were to remain until the last straggler was beyond us, after which the major proposed that, by making a wide detour, we could reach the Sinclair plantation in ample time to give an alarm, should it be learned that the attack was not advisable.

Although we were in hiding, and there was little reason for whosoever might lead this force to believe any of Marion's men were in the vicinity, the position we had taken was a dangerous one, for peradventure one of our horses was allowed to whinny, the Britishers would attack immediately, when fifty against a thousand would stand small chance of escape.

It was nightfall before the first of the red-coated column appeared, and Percy and I, standing side by side, gripping our horses' muzzles, saw the formidable 63d Regulars as they came up with swinging stride even more than a thousand strong, and marched by our place of concealment with never a thought that the very prey for whom they were seeking might be near at hand.

My heart literally stood still for the time being, because even a lad unused to warfare knew beyond a question that should these men learn where we were hidden the end would come speedily.

I hardly dared to breathe, lest by so doing an alarm be given, and yet although fifty horses were concealed either side the road, not a sound was heard to betoken their whereabouts.

The regiment marched by; then came the Tory command under Major Harrison, which I believe was even more in numbers than Major Wemyss' men, and after them, more than a thousand yards in the rear, twenty Tory stragglers.

The major, my uncle, was stationed on the opposite side of the road from where Percy and I stood, and we had no knowledge whatsoever of his movements.

When these rascally traitors to their country lounged along, evidently believing themselves safe because of the large force in advance, the thought came into my mind that it would be a proper ending to our reconnoissance if we set upon them suddenly.

This idea had no more than come into my mind when we heard a crashing noise

from the opposite side of the road, and immediately the major appeared, followed by all who had remained with him, and we needed no other signal.

In a twinkling, as it were, the Tory stragglers were surrounded, and perhaps no more than sixty seconds elapsed before each man of them had been disarmed and was mounted behind one of our troop.

Then it can readily be understood that we put spurs to our horses, striking through the wooded country to the left in order to circle around the main body of the enemy, and the frightened prisoners had an opportunity of knowing that we raised good stock in Williamsburg district, for in less than an hour we were come to the Sinclair plantation.

The information for which we had sent was gained, and, in addition, we had twenty disconsolate-looking prisoners, who by this time had come to know that the Cause of freedom in the Carolinas was not yet wholly crushed out.

The renegades were herded into a stable, and, to the surprise of us all, no order was given to dismount.

That portion of the force which had been left behind with General Marion was in the saddle when we came up, and there they remained, as did we, while our officers, withdrawing to a clump of live oaks near at hand, entered into what proved to be a long, and certainly was a serious, consultation.

We knew full well that our future movements were being decided upon, and although there were more than two thousand armed men in the immediate vicinity searching for us, who would soon be joined by Tarleton's Legion, I believe there was not one of our brigade who did not hope most certainly that we would be pitted against them, desperate though the odds were.

Not until an hour before sunrise was the consultation come to an end, and then came the long expected order to advance.

“Ay; but in what direction?” Gavin Witherspoon, who was by my side, asked in a low tone, and the answer came later, when General Marion said:

“My men, it is the opinion of all in command that we return to Lynch’s Creek, and I ask you to have confidence in us who have arrived at this decision, which is as painful to those who made it as to those who hear it. Nothing can be accomplished by staying here where capture or death must inevitably result; but so long as we remain at liberty, so long will the Cause live, and I promise you that however unpleasant and apparently disastrous may seem this move, you shall yet have many opportunities of striking at the British uniform. I ask that you follow, as you have done since I came among you, cheerfully and without question, believing that this step has not been decided upon without due deliberation.”

“We are on the retreat,” Gavin Witherspoon said to me as the general ceased

speaking, and the words were no more than uttered before a groan was heard throughout the entire line.

I here set it down, repeating the words that these brave fellows, only an hundred and fifty strong, could not repress their sorrow because at this moment, when we were threatened by over two thousand armed men, one-half of them well-trained troops, the word had been given to fall back.

It is proof of the spirit of patriotism which animated the hearts of those in Williamsburg district, that they were saddened only because of not being brought immediately face to face with an enemy which could conquer them by sheer force of numbers.

If the cause of liberty was crushed out elsewhere, it yet lived and burned with an ardent flame in the hearts of those who had pledged themselves to follow General Marion, and among these patriots Percy Sumter and myself had the good fortune to be numbered.

Well, we set out on what can be called none other than a retreat, for once we left the enemy behind us there was no other name for the move. The old camp at Lynch's Creek was the direct road to North Carolina, and the king's forces were hunting for us in Williamsburg district.

Now let it be fully understood what all that meant, and then in years to come no man may wonder why we whose homes were hereabout had sadness in our hearts.

For the first time since we had risen in our might against the king's oppression, were the people of Williamsburg and of Pedee to be left unprotected. Until this moment the enemy had never appeared in our neighborhood with such a force as enabled them to over-run it without fear of opposition.

Once we were gone our people must suffer the tender mercies of the Britishers and the Tories who had in other parts of the Carolinas, wherever they penetrated, written their names in blood and in flame,

Heretofore the James family, standing at the head of those who served the Cause, had kept this section of the Carolina colonies free from the invader. Now they were to leave it—to abandon it—while there were yet two thousand enemies in the district with more to come, and knowing full well that should they ever return again it would be to find their houses smoking ruins, their wives and children homeless and wandering. It was to leave behind all that was dear, and all that was sacred in order that the flame of freedom might, although burning feebly, yet be unquenched.

Even if Percy and I were yet lads, we were full grown in the knowledge of what had been and what would come, therefore, but in a lesser degree, of course, were we bowed down by sorrow as, setting our faces in that direction which would lead us away from home, we allowed the steeds to make their way at such pace as pleased them.

No man set spur on that ride ; no man urged his horse forward, for it was as if we were held back by chains, and little wonder.

At the time this seemed to us to be a shameful march ; but now I can look back upon it and realize how necessary it was—can understand that He who rules the destinies of nations had willed that, like the children of Israel, we should wander through the desert a certain time before we were come to the Promised Land.

Now having set down all that was in our hearts at this time, let me hurry over such portion of the story, for it is not pleasant to dwell upon it.

We arrived at Lynch's Creek that evening, and here we were halted only so long as was necessary to make the arrangements already decided upon between our leaders.

Those who had families were requested, when we had come into the old camp, to leave the brigade and return home, there to remain until such time as they might be again summoned.

This was done in order that we might move more secretly, and also that those who were needed at home should be enabled to give to their loved ones at least the last words which might be spoken on earth.

Within an hour our force was reduced to sixty men, and yet there remained among us every member of the James family—a fact which went far toward cheering Percy and I in this retreat.

Five were there, John, William, Gavin, Robert and James, and each had a family; yet none would desert the leader in whom they had every confidence—none would desert the Cause, although it was come so low. Yet for the honor of those who dropped out, it must be said that they were ready at the first signal to rejoin the brigade.

Gavin Witherspoon had a wife and five children, the youngest eight years old. To him I said, when, man after man, raising his hat in adieu, departed with an expression on his face which told of the sadness in his heart :

“It is for you to go also, Gavin. Such as Percy and I can well be spared, even though we leave behind a mother whom we love ; but she has kinsfolk who will comfort her.”

“My family are alone in the district, Robert Sumter, and yet they will be comforted, knowing that I am doing my duty as a man.”

“Yet every one should care for his own, and you can well be spared when this movement is no more than a retreat.”

“Ay, so I may be,” the old man replied emphatically, and in such a tone as caused me to grip him heartily by the hand. “So I may be, and yet it would shame me to go, because now has come the hour of our adversity—the time when all hope seems to have fled ; but my desire to free the colonies from the yoke of the king is as strong as when I first set out, nigh on to four years ago. I shall remain in the saddle, Robert Sumter, until we have won that toward which we set our faces, or a British bullet

has brought me low, and in the doing find happiness for myself as well as give comfort to those who look upon me for an example.”

It was a brave man who spoke those words, and I said then in my heart that never again would I allow another to utter aught against Gavin Witherspoon—never again would I allow Percy or myself to laugh at his oddities or his whimsical fancies.

Freshly mounted were we who left Lynch's Creek at sunset on the day when we were arrived at the old camp, after those who went insisted on bringing to us their best horses and the major part of all their store of ammunition, because, in so doing, it seemed as if they were contributing in some slight degree to sustaining the Cause which they had long since despaired of seeing successful.

Dark days indeed were these which had come upon us ; but they were needed, as was afterwards proven, to strengthen our

hearts for the future trial, which led us on to victory when defeat was seemingly already upon us.

From the hour of leaving Lynch's Creek until we were arrived in North Carolina, at Amy's Mill on Downing Creek, we never drew rein, save to halt that the tired steeds might find rest, and at this last encampment, we remained four and twenty hours.

From there a detachment of ten was sent back as scouts to gain intelligence of what might be going on in the lower Carolinas, and to cheer those of our number who had been left behind, in order that the fire of patriotism might be kept burning.

Then once more we took up the line of retreat, holding it until we were come to the east side of White Marsh, near the head of the Waccamaw River, where my uncle, the major, told us three comrades that a permanent camp would be established.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLACK MINGO SWAMP.

A PROTRACTED halt to men whose hearts are heavy is not a desirable boon, and so we from Williamsburg soon discovered.

The first idea in our minds, when we were come into camp and began to build shelters for ourselves, each after his own liking, was that we could enjoy this respite from a roving life, where it was necessary to be constantly on the alert against danger.

Once we had really settled down, however, and there was nothing of especial moment with which to occupy our attention, the hours moved so slowly as to seem like unto days.

At first we three comrades spent a goodly portion of the time speculating among our-

selves as to how long we might be able to hold the field against the numberless men which the king was sending in pursuit; but after a time we were wearied with such occupation, and began to long for active duty.

This isolation and sense of perfect security grew irksome, and there was not a man among the small detachment who would not gladly have faced a foe of five times our number, in order to shake off the lethargy which began to creep over him after eight and forty hours had passed.

On the fourth day after our having settled down in this encampment, Major James and Captain Mouzon were sent back into the lower Carolinas to make certain those who were enlisted in the Williamsburg brigade held steadfast to their pledges, and the absence of our uncle was to Percy and I like a great calamity. We looked upon him not only as the head of the family; but as a true friend and companion-in-arms upon whom we could rely under every cir-

cumstance, and although not thrown much in his company because of the position we occupied in the force, the knowledge of his being near at hand, did we need his advice, was in itself a pleasurable satisfaction which we failed fully to realize until he was absent.

When a week passed and we were "rusting out," as Gavin Witherspoon said, it seemed absolutely necessary we have some employment, and the old man said to me one morning while Percy was making ready the breakfast:

"Three men have already been sent out as scouts since we came into this camp, and such duty is necessary because it stands to reason that the Tories will make every effort to discover the general's hiding-place."

"Ay, all you have said is true, Gavin Witherspoon," I replied; "but of what avail is it to us since the general calls upon others to act as scouts, forgetting that we readily performed such duty when it was

an hundred times more dangerous than at present?"

"This is how it may avail," the old man said in the tone of one who defies contradiction. "You shall go this morning to General Marion and offer the services of us three, promising that we will act as scouts so long as the detachment remains here."

"But if he refuses to detail us for such work?"

"Then pluck up sufficient courage to remind him that we went gladly, when, perchance, every man in the command would have hesitated. By so doing you may make him understand he owes something to us three."

At first thought I was not willing to browbeat our commander, for it appeared to me that what Gavin Witherspoon had proposed was little less than an attempt to bully the general into acceding to our desires; but the longer I considered the matter the more reasonable did it seem

that we should be sent out, rather than forced to remain in camp where our presence was of no possible benefit.

By going we should take away nothing of value from the encampment, and it might be possible fortune would so favor us that we could render some signal assistance, even though it did not seem probable there was any force of the enemy in that vicinity.

Therefore it was that I did as Gavin Witherspoon requested, and to our great surprise the general not only willingly gave his consent, but said it pleased him much that we should so desire to serve the Cause.

“While we remain here waiting such turn in the tide of affairs as will give us an opportunity to serve the colonists, it is well to know thoroughly all the country and its inhabitants,” he said in conclusion. “Therefore, so that you return to camp and report once in every four and twenty hours, you not only have my permission;

but will lay me under obligation by acting the part of scouts, spies or whatsoever you choose to call the officer."

It can well be understood that we did not linger long after this interview.

In less than an hour we three, provided with such store of provisions as would be our portion until the following day, and carrying an ample amount of ammunition, set out with no idea whatsoever as to where chance might lead us, save that it seemed wisest to travel toward the south, for in that direction lay home and friends.

Gavin Witherspoon at once took command of the party by proceeding in advance, and we, having good cause to trust him implicitly, were more than willing to follow as he should propose.

There was no thought in our minds that a single enemy might be near at hand.

The only possibility counted upon was that we should run across one or more Tories seeking to find the encampment, and thus, perchance, prevent discovery.

Thus it was we proceeded with a certain amount of caution, although not deeming it necessary.

Until late in the afternoon we traveled along the banks of the Waccamaw River, our faces turned toward Williamsburg, and then Percy said, as he threw himself at full length by the side of the stream :

“ We are come on a mission which cannot bear fruit, and it makes little difference whether we halt here, or five miles further on. Having remained so long in camp without exercise, my legs tire quickly, and I propose to rest for the night.”

We were ready to gratify him in this respect, the more so because all of us were in much the same condition, and therefore it was that our scout came to an end, for the time being, hardly more than fifteen miles from the starting-point.

Surely we had no reason to grumble against fortune on this our first visit in the Upper Carolinas.

Such food as we had was ready cooked,

and in order to make camp it was only necessary to lie down among the bushes, where for a time all slept as we had not done during the time of idleness.

The sun was within an hour of setting when I awakened and found my companions lying in restful attitudes, but with open eyes.

They also had satisfied the desire for slumber.

How it chanced that we three remained there without speaking one to another, I know not ; but so we did, strangely enough, and because of our unwitting silence were we enabled to accomplish that which had seemed improbable.

Human voices in the distance, but sounding nearer and nearer, attracted our attention, causing all three to rise and seek better concealment, when we saw through the foliage a party of seven armed men coming up the bank of the stream from the south, and proceeding with a certain degree of caution which told that

they were in search of something or some one.

Although not absolutely certain, we felt reasonably sure these travelers were enemies, and well we might, considering the fact that nowhere between here and the Carolinas was it known that any friends of the Cause had habitation.

When the party passed where we were in hiding, they had ceased conversation; therefore we had no means of determining who they were, save that all wore portions of a Britisher's accouterments, while our friends still held to the powder-horn and shot-pouch.

Not until they were lost to view in the distance did either of us speak, and then it was Percy who said, much as if he had made an important discovery:

“They are Tories, and searching for General Marion's encampment.”

“I allow all that to be true, lad, and now what may be our duty?” Gavin Wither-
spoon asked.

“To learn where they halt for the night, and then carry the information back to camp,” my brother said heedlessly, for indeed that seemed to be the only course left for us.

“There is in my mind a better plan, lad, and, if it so be you two are willing to take the chances, I venture to predict we will carry yonder gentlemen before General Marion, instead of hastening ahead to tell him they are coming.”

“Do you mean that we three are to attack seven?” Percy asked, and the old man said with a smile:

“I have seen both you lads ride gallantly forward when it was a case of twenty against one, and yet you hesitate with the odds not much more than double against us?”

“Percy does not hesitate,” I replied, jealous lest there should be a question as to the courage of one of our family. “So that it is in your mind, Gavin Witherspoon,

we will agree to anything that has the faintest hope of success.”

“This is my plan : Yonder strangers are doubtless enemies ; but if they prove to be friends, then have we done them no harm by carrying out that which is in my mind. We will follow so far in the rear that there is no danger of being discovered until they camp for the night, and then it will go hard indeed if we fail to find an opportunity for making them prisoners.”

I did not agree with Gavin Witherspoon in his belief that we might readily make prisoners of seven men ; yet was I well pleased to venture the attempt, believing something of good might come, even though we failed in the purpose. It was seldom we who held true to the colonies had an opportunity of striking even so slight a blow as this when the odds were no more than two against one, and it would have been folly for us to have refused such a chance.

Percy, once the plan was made plain, did

not consider it necessary to say whether he agreed to it or not.

To his mind, all who were acquainted with him should know he would favor any plan, and there was little need for Gavin Witherspoon to go further into details than he had already done.

“It is such work as this for which we left the camp,” Percy said quietly, “and if the strangers are friends, we can atone for any rough handling by showing them the way to General Marion’s camp.”

This, so nearly as I can repeat it after these many years, was all that passed between us regarding the venture, and we set off on the trail without further delay.

There is less difficulty in successfully stalking a man than a deer, and this last had both Percy and I performed time and time again until it seemed to us like a simple task. Therefore it was that Gavin Witherspoon had no green hands to aid him in the work he had cut out.

Keeping so far in the rear as to hear the

noise as they forced their way through the underbrush, and yet not so near that we might by any possibility be seen, the three of us followed this little company who might be friends, but were probably enemies, until the going down of the sun, when we knew from such sounds as came to us that they had halted.

Now it was only a matter of waiting, which, under almost any circumstances, is the most difficult task to perform patiently; yet every lad who has hunted wild turkeys is well schooled in such work, and it can safely be said that we did not risk a failure by being over-eager.

The men, although having advanced with but little caution, realized the fact that there might be enemies in the vicinity, for they forbore building a camp-fire, and this fact rendered our work rather more difficult than it otherwise would have been.

After it was certain they had settled down for the night we stole nearer and nearer, until it was possible to hear the

conversation carried on in an ordinary tone, and then we remained motionless until the time for action should arrive.

When we were come thus far I believed we should hear such words as would declare whether these seven men were friends or enemies, and in this I was not disappointed, although we failed to learn anything of importance.

While eating supper one of them, in the course of the ordinary conversation concerning the tramp of the day, remarked :

“There is no probability we shall find any of the rebels during the next two or three days’ march, for as yet we are among those who remain loyal to the king.”

The words as written above were all we had to give us a clue to the character of these strangers ; but they were sufficient.

We knew now, as well as if these men had explained at length, that they were in search of General Marion’s encampment, and from that instant, answering for Percy as well as Gavin Witherspoon, I know that

the three of us counted on making a capture at whatsoever hazard.

Not until fully an hour after the men had stretched themselves upon the ground and the last word was spoken between them, did we make a move toward nearing the encampment.

Then it was that I would have gone forward, risking the danger with the belief that my life had better be made the price, rather than either of the others, when the old man laid his hand on mine as he whispered softly in my ear :

“It is for me to go, first, because I have had more experience in such work, and again, on the plea that I can best be spared to the Cause if either of us must pay a penalty for leading in the attack.”

Although there may be the twang of a braggart in the words, still must it be set down that I tried to restrain Gavin Witherspoon, but without success.

When I would have pushed him away he held me back, and it seemed impossi-

ble to advance without such a squabble as would have given the alarm.

I was absolutely forced to let him take the lead ; but Percy and I kept close upon his heels.

When, after creeping so cautiously that not a twig snapped beneath our weight, we had come to the small cleared place on the bank of the stream which the men had selected as an encampment, we saw that they were sleeping near the foot of a pine tree that had been overturned by the wind.

The overhanging mass of roots formed a certain sort of shelter which served to protect them from the dew.

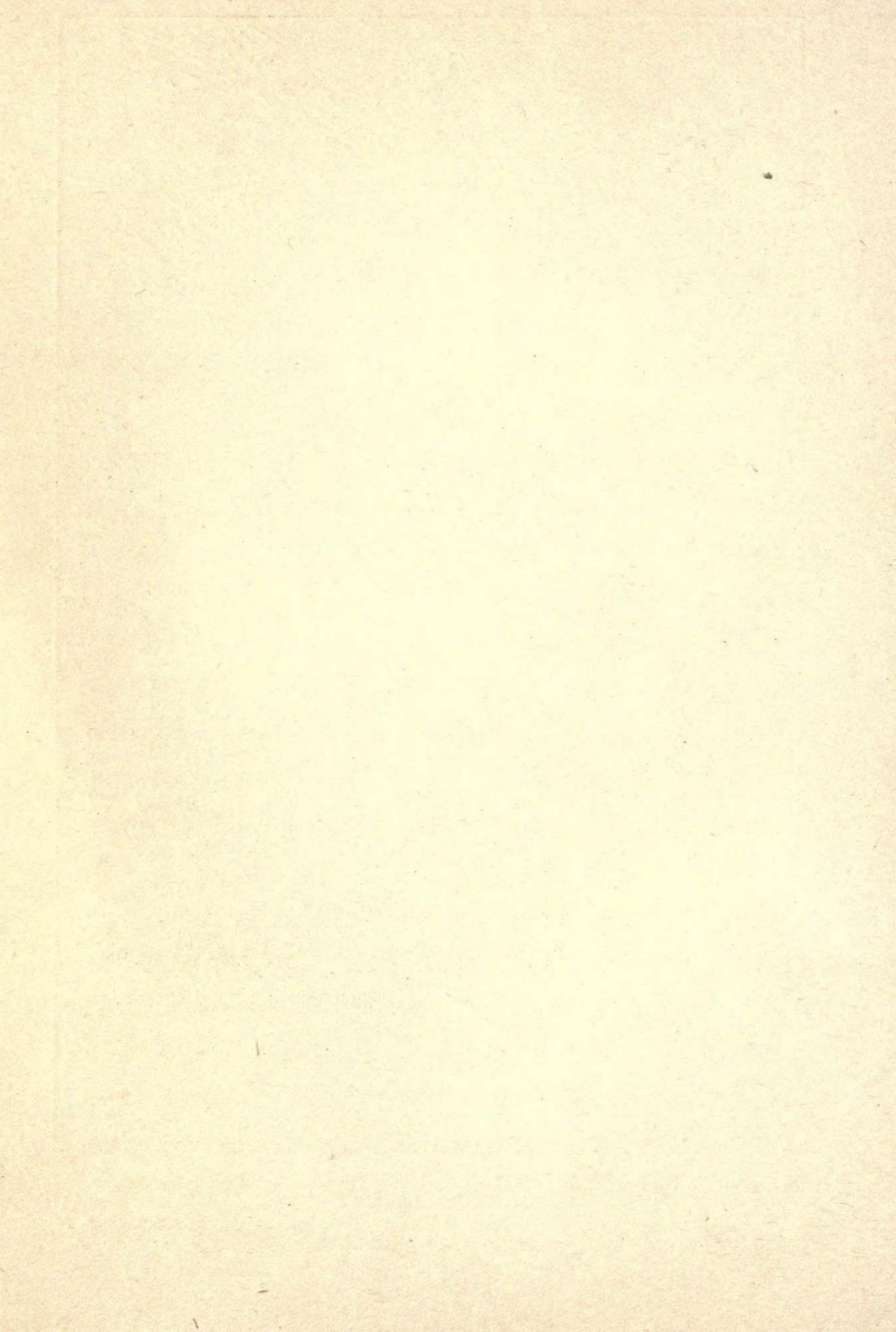
Their rifles were stacked against one of the branches at a distance of fully three yards from where they lay, and, as a matter of course, it was necessary to first secure possession of these.

Gavin did his work, as we knew beyond a question he could do, and when he raised himself beside the weapons, we two, Percy



As Gavin gathered up the weapons, Percy and I called upon the sleepers to surrender.—Page 183.

With the Swamp Fox.



and I, sprang to our feet, calling upon the sleepers to surrender.

They had no other choice than to obey, and sheepish indeed were these seven after we had drawn them up in line, when they understood how small was the force which had taken them prisoners.

Yet were they reasonably good men, so far as Tories go, inasmuch as no one spoke a word, all refusing to answer the questions which we asked.

So far as we ourselves were concerned this made little difference, and without delay, although they as well as ourselves were fatigued, most likely, by the long tramp, we began the return to General Marion's camp.

As it proved later, our capture was of great importance, even though the prisoners stoutly refused to give information when the general questioned them, for their presence showed that Tarleton was hot after us, knowing somewhat of our whereabouts, and the time was come when we

must retreat yet further, or return to the task of showing the invaders that the spirit of liberty in these southern colonies was not yet crushed out.

Now let me set down here what we had learned since the day when we set free the one hundred and fifty Continentals who refused, save in the case of the three true men, to join our force.

Major Wemyss had marched for seventy miles from Nelson's Ferry, straight across the district of Williamsburg, desolating a path fifteen miles in breadth after such merciless fashion that one would have said he had been taught in the schools of the savage.

All the dwellings on his way, save those habited by well-known Tories, were given to the flames ; the people were plundered of their possessions ; such property as the troops could not use was destroyed, while the animals were wantonly shot and allowed to rot where they fell.

Those who were thus plundered saw all

their belongings swept away by fire, and they, even to the women and children, were held forcibly back to prevent them from saving the smallest article of value.

Men were hanged without semblance of trial, and when their loved ones pleaded for mercy, the British soldiery rode them down.

All the time it seemed almost as if the good God had forsaken the colonies, and yet we came to know that all these acts of barbarous cruelty were necessary to arouse our people from the fear and the dependency into which they had fallen.

It did arouse them.

It forced men into the ranks of the patriots who otherwise would have waited quietly by until the colonies or the king should have proven a right to the country.

Within two days from the time the seven scouts were taken prisoners and we had arrived at our encampment, the hour was come when we should return, and among

those on the banks of the Waccamaw who held steadfast to General Marion, there was no one who did not rejoice because the moment for action was at hand.

Taking the prisoners with us, we set out on a forced march, which was continued night and day until we had seen the sun rise and set three times while we yet remained in the saddle, save when it was absolutely necessary to give rest to our steeds.

Then we were come to Lynch's Creek once more—to the old camp—where we found all those who had waited behind until the signal should be given, with the addition of more than two hundred new recruits—men who had been driven by the cruelty of the king's hirelings into the ranks of those who would save their country.

More than this, those whom we met gave information that Major Wemyss had retired to Georgetown, wearied with chasing the Swamp Fox, and a body of six

hundred well-armed Tories were encamped near Black Mingo Swamp, fifteen miles below where we were halted, under command of Captain John Ball.

Here was our work cut out for us, and like the true patriot and ardent soldier that he was, General Marion gave us no cause to complain of hesitation on his part.

It was less than four hours from the time our command was halted, and while yet we were exchanging greetings with those who had parted from us so many days before, that our commander, calling the men in a body around him, thus spoke :

“Hardly more than two hours’ ride from here are encamped a force of these renegades whom we call Tories. They outnumber us slightly ; but even though there were twice as many, yet I believe you who have served so gallantly under me since I came into the Williamsburg district, could whip them in the open field. We are told that recruits are flocking from

every quarter of this portion of the colony to join us, and by waiting we may double our strength; yet at the same time it is possible that the enemy will take the alarm and flee. I propose that we march at once, and within twenty-four hours from the time of returning to the scene of our labors strike such a blow as shall give Tarleton and Wemyss to understand that the spirit of liberty has been revived, rather than broken, by their butcheries and their barbarities."

A ringing cheer, in which every man participated, was the answer to this speech, and more than that no commander could need.

Five minutes later, it could not have been more, we were in the saddle, led by two sons of Captain Waties, who had already made themselves familiar with the approaches to the enemy's camp, and Major James, my uncle, said as he reined his horse in that he might fall back between Percy and I for a moment:

“Lads, we have once more taken up the work, and with such a commander I venture to predict that it will not cease, until the last adherent to the Cause has yielded up his life, or we have brought the Carolinas out from under the sway of the butchers.”

Gavin Witherspoon, who had been riding slightly in the rear, spurred his horse forward until he could speak with my uncle :

“Whereabout in the Black Mingo are these scurvy scoundrels encamped?”

“At Shepherd’s Ferry on the south side of the stream.”

“Then we must cross that bridge on planks, if I mistake not, in order to come at them?”

“You are right, Gavin.”

“And so many horsemen as we number may not be able to do that without giving an alarm.”

“It is a chance which we must take. Whether they have warning of our approach, or not, from the moment we reach the causeway our advance must be rapid.”

Then my uncle rode ahead to join General Marion, and we, tired and sleepy from being long in the saddle without proper hours of rest, relapsed into silence until we were arrived at this same bridge of which Gavin had spoken.

It was midnight, and I had said to Percy that all the odds were in our favor, so far as taking the enemy by surprise was concerned, when the foremost of the troops clattered across the planks.

Within sixty seconds an alarm gun was heard from the Tory encampment.

Now was come the time, and the first, when we two lads were to take part in a conflict where the enemy was expecting us.

It would be a real battle, and Percy cried, clasping my hand as we spurred our horses on at a gallop lest we be left in the rear :

“ We may perchance come to our death, Bob, before the sun shall rise again ; but it shall never be said that we failed to follow the head of the family wherever he might lead ! ”

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE.

OF the battle, short, sharp and bloody, which followed after we had given the alarm by riding across the plank causeway into Black Mingo Swamp, I can set down but little of my own knowledge, because Gavin Witherspoon, Percy and myself were with what was called, for the time being, the "cavalry," and we saw only that portion of the engagement which fell to our share.

However, I have heard my uncle tell the story again and again in these words, and there can be no doubt as to its correctness, however the historian of the future may write concerning the action :

"After the alarm gun sounded, promptness and swift riding became as necessary

as had caution, and the general ordered his men to follow him at a gallop until the force reached the main road, about three hundred yards from where it was known the enemy lay.

“Here, with the exception of a small number who were to act as cavalry, the entire command dismounted. A body of picked men under Captain Waties was ordered down the road to attack Dollard’s house where the Tories had been posted. Two companies under Hugh Horry were sent to the right, and the cavalry to the left, to support the attack, Marion himself bringing up the rear.

“It so happened, however, that the Tories had left the house immediately after being alarmed, and were strongly drawn up in a field near at hand.

“Here it was they encountered Horry’s command on the advance, with a fire equally severe and unexpected. The effect was that of a surprise upon the colonists. Horry’s troops fell back in confusion, but

were promptly rallied and brought on the charge.

“Immediately the battle became obstinate and bloody ; but the appearance of the men under Waties, who came up suddenly in the rear of the Tories, soon brought it to a close. Finding themselves between two fires, the enemy gave way in all directions to flee for refuge to the neighboring swamp of Black Mingo.”

This is the story of the battle as I have heard my uncle tell it many times.

As for the part which we three comrades played, I can say but little in detail.

When the advance was ordered we rode forward eagerly, for inaction had whetted our desire, and once more we gave the renegade sons of the colony a much needed lesson.

To me the engagement was not as desperate as either of the others in which Percy and I had taken part, for at no time did we of the cavalry come to a hand-to-hand encounter with those who chose to serve a

king whose only delight was in oppression ; but that it was a real and a bloody battle was known full well after we had gained possession of the field, for then our officers learned from such prisoners as had been taken, that the enemy outnumbered us two to one, and of all those engaged, true colonists as well as false, a full third were killed or disabled.

Our loss was great, when one takes into consideration the fact that we made the attack, and that it was in a certain sense surprising.

Captain Logan was killed ; Captain Mouzon and Lieutenant Scott so severely wounded that even though their lives were saved it would be impossible for them to do active service again, and more than an hundred people were dead or disabled.

Among the Tories the execution had been great ; Captain Ball was dead, and a full two hundred lay on the ground lifeless, or wounded to such an extent that retreat was impossible.

In addition to that, we had among us one hundred and two as prisoners, and they who had a few hours previous believed the Cause of freedom in the Carolinas was dead, now pleaded eagerly to be allowed to enlist.

They had no love for country ; but were ready as ever to join such force as appeared to be gaining ascendancy, and this one victory had put the Cause on a different footing from what it had been since the day we made the attack upon the Prince of Wales' regiment at Nelson's Ferry.

In discussing this engagement afterward, Gavin, Percy and I have decided, to our own satisfaction at least, that not one among our leaders had any idea of the good which might result from what was little less than a chance encounter when the king's officers believed we had been whipped into submission.

We ourselves almost became weary of it as the days passed and this man or that,

who had previously declared his allegiance to the king, came into camp, begging the privilege to enlist under the banner of General Marion.

But I am getting ahead of my story, and it is little wonder, for on the night before the battle at the Black Mingo we had considered ourselves outlaws, whose only hope lay in striking one or more severe blows before death should befall us. Then to find that the Cause had suddenly received a new lease of life was so unexpected and happily surprising, that even at this late day I cannot forbear a sense of triumph such as I did not know even on the day peace was declared, when these colonies had become a free nation—a nation such as I doubt not will one day be a power in the world.

We laid in this captured camp sufficiently long to give all our friends opportunity of joining us, and the faint-hearted inhabitants nearabout time to declare their pretended love for the Cause, before

attempting to continue the lesson to the red-coats which had been so long delayed.

It was during this time of inaction that we were joined by a young man hardly older than myself, who was destined to make the fourth in our comradeship.

This was none other than Gabriel Marion, the general's nephew, a lad loved by our commander as if he had been a son, and on whom one might pin his faith, knowing full well it would never be betrayed.

This Gabriel did not resemble his uncle in feature, else might we never have come to take him to our hearts as we did. The general wore a somber countenance, while the lad was ever smiling, however great the danger which threatened.

The general rarely spoke in a jovial tone, while Gabriel never lost an opportunity of uttering a jest.

Within half an hour after he rode into the captured camp at Shepherd's Ferry the general sent for Percy and myself, and, when we presented ourselves, intro-

duced his nephew much in the following fashion :

“This lad is as dear to me as a son, and his honor, his courage and patriotism as near to my heart as my own, therefore do I present him to you two lads whom I know to be true and faithful to whatsoever you set your word. Make of him a comrade, and you will please me ; hold him to his duties as you hold each other, and you will benefit him.”

No words could have been more flattering or more pleasing to us, and it can well be imagined that we were especially careful from this day out to merit the continuance of the same favorable opinion.

Gabriel was a lad whom all would love immediately after knowing him, and once having formed his acquaintance, he was found to be the same one day as another,—a true, lovable comrade.

To him, as a matter of course, we told all that had come to us, since we were regularly enrolled as members of his uncle's

force, and in so doing spoke necessarily of Sam Lee.

Although we held ourselves ever ready to meet any enemies of the Cause, it was that young Tory whom we especially hoped to come across.

If I have not heretofore set it down strongly, let it be understood we had never come to a new neighborhood without a strong hope that he might be met, and the three of us were resolved to capture him at the first opportunity whatever the hazard, for in all the Carolinas could be found no more bitter enemy than this same lad who had taken sides with the hirelings of the king simply because of his own vicious nature.

“Without good reason therefor, Sam Lee is, I believe, bent on doing all possible harm to us of Williamsburg, and when we have made him prisoner, holding the scoundrel so close that he cannot escape until the Cause be won or hopelessly lost, we shall have accomplished a good work,”

Percy said when I had finished the story regarding that young Tory.

“How may he, a lad without influence, do so much mischief?” Gabriel asked, and Gavin Witherspoon replied promptly :

“It is because of being a mere boy that gives him the advantage. Unless our friends know him for what he is, it would naturally be thought that he was incapable of harm. I had rather have him in my clutches than any man short of a major in the British service.”

“What prevents our setting out some day and bringing him into camp?” Gabriel asked with a merry laugh ; but there was no need I should answer the question, for he knew full well had it been possible we would have had the Tory within our grasp long before this.

Just how many days we remained in camp at Shepherd’s Ferry I am unable to set down, because there was much to occupy our time, although such occupation

was not directly connected with the Cause.

We four comrades were constantly being sent out as scouts, or to urge that the planters near at hand bring in food, so that one day went by after another with exceeding swiftness and so much of pleasurable intercourse that it was more like a merry-making than a struggle against a mighty king.

However, the day came when word was whispered round about the camp that we were to set out at once for Lynch's Creek, to make an attack upon Colonel Harrison and his Tory Legion.

While we were preparing for the journey, good friends came in with tidings that the renegades were gathering in large force in and about Salem and the fork of Black River.

Here it was, so we were told, that Colonel Tynes of the British service had appeared, summoning the people as good subjects of his majesty to take the field

against their countrymen, and he brought with him ample supplies of war materials, provisions, and even of luxuries such as our people had not seen for many a month.

Eager though we were to be at Harrison's Tories, the tidings of new muskets with bayonets, broad swords, pistols, saddles, bridles, and of powder and ball which the Britisher had brought with him caused our mouths to water.

Had General Marion neglected to take advantage of such opportunity as seemed suddenly to have presented itself, I believe the men of his brigade, obedient and faithful as they had been, would have burst into loud murmurings, for we were sadly in need of equipments.

Before the day on which this information was brought had come to an end, others who were friendly to the Cause arrived with the definite information that Colonel Tynes was encamped at Tarcote, on the forks of Black River, and apparently so secure in mind regarding his position

that such watchfulness as common prudence would have dictated was neglected.

It was just such an advantage as General Marion delighted in ; exactly the kind of work for which we of the brigade were best adapted, and every man was in a fever to be at the task which was at one and the same time for the benefit of the Cause and the better equipment of ourselves.

While the officers deliberated, the rank and file announced what articles they most needed, as if it were only necessary to make the statement in order to have their desires fulfilled, and, in short, there was not one among us but that believed we could have for the choosing anything in Colonel Tynes' stores.

Tarleton with his Legion was hot after us, and so every one knew ; but thus far we had failed to meet him, and between his force and ours was that gallant general of Carolina, my father's kinsman, General Sumter standing ever ready to interpose lest Tarleton should fall upon General Marion

when he was least prepared, and who delighted in leading that British butcher on a wild-goose chase.

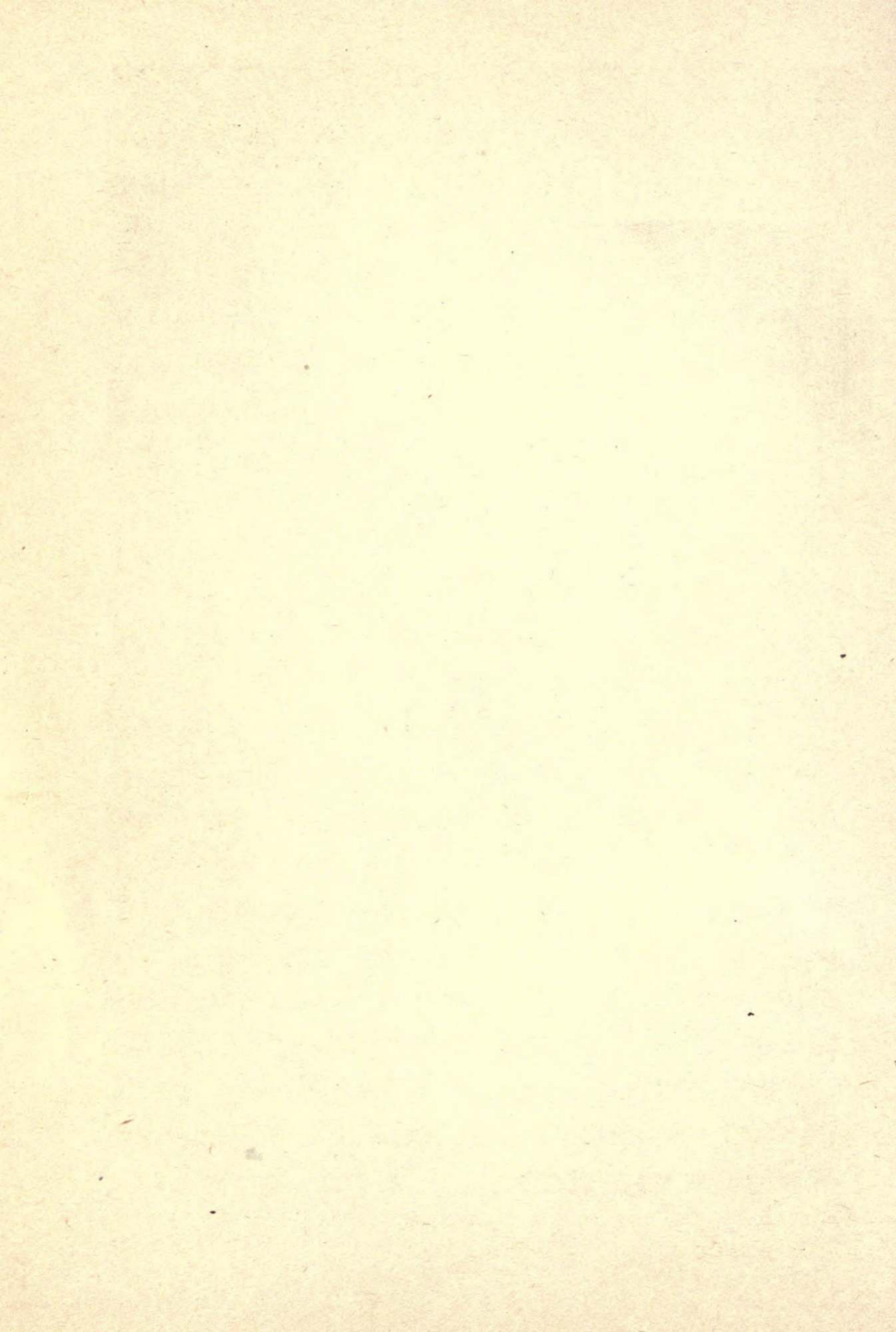
Truly we two, Percy and I, had reason to be proud of the men to whom we were bound by ties of blood, for the names of Sumter and James stood high, and with good cause, among the defenders of the Carolinas in those dark days when armed resistance seemed little short of suicide.

I realize that this task which Percy has insisted I shall perform is being done in a halting fashion, because of my speaking overly much, perhaps, of those who remained true during the darkest days known by the southern colonies; but yet how may it be possible to tell any portion of the story of the Carolinas without mentioning again and again the names of those patriots who ventured life and fortune when such sacrifice seemed hopeless?

However, just now must be told what we of the Williamsburg district did with the overly confident Colonel Tynes, and yet



In the darkness we four comrades were sent forward to reconnoitre. —Page 205.
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the story must be brief, because the adventure was no more than an ordinary occurrence, where neither glory nor honor is to be won, nor great deeds accomplished.

At midnight, eight and forty hours after the news had been brought, General Marion's brigade descended upon Colonel Tynes' camp, and simply overran it.

It seems strange even now that we should have seized upon all that store, throwing so many well-armed men into a panic by simply riding among them, yet such is the fact.

When, in the darkness of the night, the brigade came upon the encampment, we four comrades were sent forward to reconnoiter, and true it is that we failed to find a single sentinel on guard. In some of the camps men were playing cards, in others they slept, and yet more sat around the camp-fires, drinking and smoking.

The officers were making merry in a building hard by, and there were none to oppose our progress.

The reconnoissance was attended with as little danger as if we four had gone out sight-seeing among friends, and when we returned to where General Marion and my uncle the major, awaited our coming, it was with a story so incredible that for an instant they could hardly believe our statements.

Then the word "Forward" was given, and we, as I have said, overran that camp without hindrance.

Neither Britisher nor Tory so much as discharged a gun; the redcoat and renegade Carolinian alike sought refuge in flight, hoping to gain the fastness of Tarcote Swamp, and to have cut them down in their panic would have been like murdering men in cold blood, for how can you take the life of him who offers no resistance?

Twenty minutes had not elapsed from the time we made our report, until the encampment with all its wealth of British stores was our own, and here and there

came some scurvy Tory crawling and cringing before our officers as he begged to be allowed the privilege of enlisting.

It was not warfare; but simply a foraging expedition among people who were the same as unarmed.

Colonel Tynes, two of his captains, and fifty-four British regulars were taken prisoners. We hardly troubled ourselves about the Tories, save that Gavin, Percy, Gabriel and I rode here and there searching eagerly for Sam Lee, but finding him not.

When day broke our men overhauled the equipments and the provisions which were intended for those who should take up arms against us, and before we gave heed to breaking our fast the old and patched saddles were replaced by new ones of English make; our powder-horns and shot-pouches were filled; we wore breeches and boots that had been brought for the benefit of our enemies, and, to a man, were as well equipped as any force the butcher Tarleton ever headed.

The prisoners were sent to Kingstree, which town we now believed ourselves capable of holding, and in the fourth encampment that had been wrested from the Britishers or their allies, we feasted and made merry, Gabriel declaring that he was "disappointed in having thus joined a band of foragers when he expected to see somewhat of warfare."

And the poor lad did see warfare in its most bitter phase before many days passed.

Now that I am come to the closing acts in this life which we knew for so short a time and loved so well, I must hasten over them because of the bitterness which comes to me with the memory that has never faded.

We three comrades—meaning Gavin, Percy and myself—had seen the darkest days of the struggle, and then suddenly participated in the joy which came to us when, seemingly without good reason, we were once more triumphant.

Gabriel had come at the moment when we were flushed with the excitement of unexpected success, and he saw but little of it, poor lad!

While we lay at Salem receiving every day new recruits from those who had been lukewarm to the Cause, and from the cowards who believed safety lay only in friendship with the "rebels," word was brought that Lord Cornwallis had begged Colonel Tarleton to "get at" General Marion.

It was said that the butcher had arisen from a bed of sickness brought about by his own excesses, with a vow that he would capture "the scurvy Swamp Fox," and that his Legion, which was before Camden, had orders to meet him on the Wateree River, from which place he would set out to make a prisoner of our general.

This information came to us at a time when we were not only ready, but willing, to meet the infamous Tarleton, although

in his Legion were two men, where there was one of ours, and, as my uncle said with a grim smile, when speaking to Gavin Witherspoon after orders had been given us to prepare for the march, "we would make Colonel Tarleton's mission as easy of accomplishment as was possible, so far as showing him the whereabouts of the Swamp Fox was concerned."

Our horses were in good condition; every man among us eager to measure strength with this human brute who had devastated the Carolinas wherever he marched, and we hardly drew rein until arriving once more at Nelson's Ferry, on the Santee River.

This was the second time we had crossed the entire district of Williamsburg with a swiftness such as astounded the British horsemen, and it is little wonder that our general received from them the name in which we of his brigade gloried.

Exactly how strong the Britishers were there was no means of knowing, although

one might guess that Tarleton would not come out with less than his full legion, which numbered upwards of eleven hundred men; but yet we pressed forward even after having come upon their trail, and knowing how much greater their force was than ours—pressed forward close upon their heels until the hour came when it would have been folly to continue on, because the horses were winded.

Then we made camp in the woods, Gabriel Marion complaining bitterly because his uncle had called a halt, although the steed the lad bestrode could not have advanced five miles more at an ordinary pace.

Near the enemy, as we knew ourselves to be, it was necessary to take every precaution at this encampment, and we were yet hard at work while our steeds were feeding, throwing up such rude shelters as would suffice for the use of the sharpshooters, when Colonel Richardson, who served under General Sumter until

wounded and had then retired to his plantation for a time, came into camp.

Percy and I were acting as sentinels when he first arrived, and, fearing some treachery, for he was a stranger to us, would have prevented him from even speaking with one of our officers, had he not referred to his services under our father's brother with such minuteness of detail that we could not longer remain incredulous.

I conducted him to where General Marion and Major James sat upon the ground amid a clump of bushes discussing plans for the next day's work, and had hardly more than saluted when a great light flashed up on the western sky.

"It is the flames of my dwelling," Colonel Richardson exclaimed bitterly, even before the general and the major had time to welcome him. "Tarleton's Legion is within five miles, bent now as ever upon their work of devastation!"

"And you have fled at such a time?"

my uncle, the major, said, in a tone very nearly that of reproach.

“I would willingly have given up my life in defense of those whom I love; but that you are in the greatest danger. Hidden with my wife and children in one of the outbuildings—no other able-bodied man on the plantation to aid me in a defense which would have been vain—I saw a lad, whom I believe to be one of the Tory Lees from nearabout Kingstree, ride up and demand audience of Tarleton. So near was the butcher to me at the moment that I heard plainly the young scoundrel’s speech, and it was to the effect that General Marion with his brigade lay here at this place. There was no longer any course left me save to give you warning, for as soon as my plantation has been ruined and the butcher satisfies himself I am not at hand to be hanged, he will make a descent upon you.”

“We have come to give him that opportunity,” my uncle, the major, said proudly,

whereat Colonel Richardson showed signs of great alarm.

“You can easily be surrounded here, and, with a force such as Tarleton has, must be cut to pieces, however bravely your men may fight. To make a stand would be useless sacrifice of life, and I conjure you, General Marion, that you seek a more advantageous place in which to meet the enemy ; but whatsoever may be your decision, I here offer myself as a recruit until you shall have given the British cut-throat a proper lesson.”

CHAPTER X.

GEORGETOWN.

THE information which Colonel Richardson brought regarding the renegade who had acquainted Tarleton with General Marion's whereabouts, fired us four comrades to such a degree that right willingly would we have pushed forward alone in the hope of taking him prisoner, even while surrounded by his British friends.

As has already been set down, we gave Sam Lee credit for doing whatsoever was in his power against us, but, while it was no surprise that he should have continued making every effort to work harm to the friends of freedom, there was mingled with our righteous anger something of astonishment at his success.

He might have lived twice the ordinary

lifetime of a man without being able to do as much mischief as in this case, when our people were making ready to fall suddenly upon Tarleton's forces.

Now, however, that was impossible. Even Major James realized that, instead of pushing on, we must beat a retreat once more, and without loss of time.

From this moment until that sad hour when Gavin, Percy and myself, to say nothing of the general, were so sorely afflicted, there is nothing of particular moment to write, except that I set down the different movements made by our brigade, and the situation of affairs in the Carolinas.

In less than twenty minutes from the time Colonel Richardson came into the encampment, were we urging our jaded steeds through that gloomy swamp known as the "wood-yard," and two hours later the command was halted on Jack's Creek.

We had covered only six miles in all that time, owing to the condition of the horses ;

but it was sufficient, so far as eluding the Britishers was concerned, because they might not find us unless, perchance, more spies were lurking around, until after the day should break.

While Colonel Tarleton was a butcher—a man who had no idea of mercy or compassion, it is only just to give him the credit of being a good soldier after his own particular fashion.

As a man to lead rough-riders, he was perhaps the best in the king's service, and we who were fleeing before him understood that not a single moment would be lost in the pursuit. Ride as fast and as constantly as we might, his men would be ever on our heels, so long as they could hold the pace, and it was endurance and the speed of the horses which should give the final result.

At daybreak our brigade was on the march once more, making its way over bogs and through swamps until it was arrived at Benbow's Ferry, about ten miles

above Kingstree, where was a strong natural camp.

It was a place with which we were all familiar. It commanded a passage of the river, and was within easy riding distance of all the country roundabout from which we must draw provisions and provender. As a rallying point it could not have been equalled in the Carolinas, and should we be hard pressed there were three difficult passes through the swamp in the rear where, if necessary, we might make a stubborn fight.

Strong as was this position, General Marion set about strengthening it yet further.

Trees were felled, breastworks put up, and in eight and forty hours we were prepared to meet Tarleton's much-vaunted legion, reasoning that our defenses made up for lack of numbers until we were fully the enemy's equal.

Now we believed that a decisive battle would soon be fought—one in which the victory could not be doubtful, but where

the conquerors might for a certain length of time hold undisputed possession of the Williamsburg district, and we counted on being those conquerors.

It was not destined, however, that the struggle in the Carolinas should be brought to so speedy a conclusion.

Tarleton pursued our brigade, losing time here and there to burn dwellings which sheltered only women and children, until he was come to within less than twelve miles of our camp, when, to the surprise of enemies as well as friends, he turned suddenly about and marched with all speed for Camden.

It was afterward said by the Tories that Lord Cornwallis had expressly ordered him to return; but more than one of us believed then, and yet hold to it, that the redcoated Britisher who could be so courageous when he had none but old men, boys and women in front of him, was absolutely afraid to measure strength with General Marion.

Now while we laid here in safety, gathering numbers every day, much was done by our friends in other parts of the colony.

General Sumter, our kinsman, gave battle to Tarleton at the Blackstock farm on the banks of the Tyger, defeating him utterly, but at a terrific loss, so far as the Cause was concerned. The Britishers had ninety-two killed and one hundred and four wounded. Among the Americans only three were slain and four wounded; but in the latter list was the general himself, who bore as marks of the victory a severely dangerous wound in the breast.

His gallant followers, true to him as was our brigade to General Marion, lashed him in the raw hide of a bullock which was slung as a litter between two horses, and thus, guarded by an hundred picked men, he was carried to the upper colony, so we were told, where he lay hovering 'twixt life and death.

It was also while we were encamped

here that the battle of King's Mountain was fought, when the British, under Major Ferguson, were defeated handsomely, the killed, wounded and captured of the enemy amounting to eleven hundred men, and among the dead was the major himself.

Two exceedingly fortunate encounters for us—encounters such as guaranteed to us final victory if we could but hold out as we had begun, and this seemed most probable, for, as ever will be the case, a successful commander finds plenty of recruits.

We of Williamsburg were not inactive during the days spent in camp; but made forays here and there, capturing in some places bands of Tories on their way to Georgetown, or, having the good fortune to come across detachments of the red-coats who were guarding store-trains, until, should I attempt to repeat all the little adventures which befell us, I might continue this writing until so many pages

were filled that one would shrink from the reading because of the magnitude of the task.

It is with the more adventurous, but yet the sadder part of our service under General Marion that I must close this record which has been intended only to show what we comrades did, up to the time Snow's Island was fortified, when we ceased active operations during the year.

The British post at Georgetown was the one place which our people most needed as a base of operations against Charleston, and, in fact, to hold our own in Williamsburg district.

Situated as it was, we were constantly menaced, wherever our brigade might be, by the enemy holding possession of the place. In addition to that, it was a depot for supplies of salt, clothing and ammunition for the king's troops, and of such goods, we who fought for the Cause were grievously in need.

To capture Georgetown would be an ex-

exploit such as might advantage our people more than had the victory at King's Mountain, therefore it was to this end that our general proposed to bend all his energies, and in the proposition he was seconded ably by such followers as Major James and Colonel Richardson, the last-named gentleman having remained with us since the day his home was destroyed.

It was believed that the enemy lay at Georgetown in great force, perhaps to the number of four thousand men, and we knew full well the nature of the fortifications round about the post.

A direct assault would have been fatal to us. It was only by such methods as had won for our general the name of "Swamp Fox," that we could succeed, and, as can well be fancied, none of our people were averse to an attempt under those circumstances, for we believed ourselves, so far as backwoods strategy was concerned, far superior to any of the king's forces.

The first we of the rank and file knew,

regarding the method by which it was hoped we might succeed, was when we broke camp, carrying with us all our equipage and so much of provisions as could be gathered from the country round about, and crossed Black River to a little settlement known as Potato Ferry, advancing toward Georgetown by that road called the "Gap Way."

Now this much by way of explanation for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the vicinity of that post.

Three miles from Georgetown is an inland swamp known as White's Bay, which, discharging itself by two mouths, the one into Black River and the other into Sampit, completely cuts off the post, which stands on the north side of the last-named river near its junction with Winyaw Bay. Over the creek which empties into Sampit there is a bridge, two miles from the town.

Now it was in the rear of this swamp that we finally came to a halt, having, as

was believed, arrived there without knowledge of the enemy.

Gavin Witherspoon claimed that he understood all which the general proposed to do, but that statement I question seriously, otherwise would we have heard from the old man concerning several moves that would have been more than injudicious if General Marion had the same idea in mind Gavin gave him credit for.

Let it be understood that we were come to this point, not more than three miles from the post, five hundred and fifty strong, each one mounted and carrying so much of provisions and provender as would suffice for eight and forty hours' consumption.

Up to the moment of our halting we had seen no persons save those whom we knew beyond a peradventure to be devoted to the Cause, and, therefore, could say to a certainty that we were thus far advanced toward the object of our desires in such fashion as the Swamp Fox most desired.

Unless some false move was made, some prying, unfriendly eye discovered us, we would be able to ride down upon Georgetown as we had ridden into many a British camp before, doing more through fear than bullets, and gaining victory where by rights none should have been enjoyed.

Well, we were halted here, and all had dismounted, each man feeding his horse in anticipation of the work to come when the speed of the animals would avail as much, perhaps even more than the accuracy of our aim.

Then it was, after a consultation with the general, my uncle advanced where all, save that line of sentinels which hemmed us in to keep prying eyes at a respectful distance, might see him, and Gabriel Marion said to me gleefully :

“ Now has come the time, lad, when we will be able to ride into this adventure side by side, and carve out for ourselves such names as shall live in the grateful memory of men after these colonies are free.”

And the dear lad did carve out a name for himself!

“I call for volunteers who will present themselves for dangerous service,” my uncle began, and every man pricked up his ears, each eager to be among those who might distinguish themselves. “Two squads of twenty each, and so many as are minded to sacrifice their lives, perchance, for the benefit of the brigade, may step forward two paces.”

Gavin, Percy, Gabriel and I advanced without loss of time, and the blood fairly leaped in my veins when I saw that of all the brigade every man had made the same movement.

In General Marion's force each was equally eager to lay down his life for the others, and it was that spirit which finally gained for us the independence of the American colonies.

“I had expected some such outburst of patriotism; but failed by a considerable degree to anticipate the reality,” my uncle,

the major, said with a smile of satisfaction. "You be brave lads all, as has been proven many and many a time before, and therefore each and every one is entitled to the honor of making his life the sacrifice for the others; but, unfortunately for your desires, only forty men may be chosen. Let those who are willing to relinquish the desire to show their love for country in order that others who, perhaps, can better be spared may make any sacrifice, retreat two paces."

Not a man moved; every trooper of the Williamsburg brigade stood firm in place, as if determined that he, and he alone, should be the one who would give up his life for the other, and among them all were we four comrades, tried and true—comrades who were destined to ride on until we saw one of our number fall, foully murdered, without being able to raise a hand in his defense.

Now it was that General Marion advanced to the side of my uncle, his eyes all

aflame, and more enthusiasm showing in that quiet face than I had ever believed could find a place there.

“Gentlemen of the Williamsburg brigade, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Many a time before have you proven yourselves heroes; but never so truly, never so emphatically as at this moment—when every man of you is eager to offer up his life, and in that for which the volunteers are called I do assure you there are eight chances out of ten that no one comes back alive. Now I entreat that so many of you as are fathers of families shall step back, allowing younger soldiers to take your places.”

Yet every man remained in his place, and it seemed much as though we might come at loggerheads, one with the other, as to who should die first, for all knew that this attack upon the well-fortified, over-garrisoned post of Georgetown was no child's play, no feint at warfare; but a desperate undertaking which to succeed

must be carried on with total disregard of life.

“Now has come the time when I myself must make the selection,” the major, my uncle, said with a look on his face which told how greatly this exhibition pleased him. “I shall call out one man, and the general may select another, each making his choice until the forty have been chosen. Let it be remembered that in this case I exercise the right to use favoritism, for there be among you lads of my own blood whom I am minded shall go forth in preference to those who have families dependent upon them. Therefore, men, do not blame me when I claim what I *may* claim, even disregarding the privilege of others.”

Then it was, and proud am I to write it, that he cried out :

“ Robert Sumter ! ”

I stepped forward, my face flushed with pardonable pride, and in his turn the general cried :

“ Gabriel Marion ! ”

“Percy Sumter!” my uncle next called, and the general added:

“Gavin Witherspoon!”

Thus were we four comrades the first to be selected for this post of honor which will be remembered, as I fondly believe, long after we are gone from this world, and in all the Carolinas were no four individuals more puffed up with pride and pleasure than we.

Around us everywhere were envious eyes, as if life had suddenly lost all its charm, and death were the one thing most desired.

Man after man was thus summoned to take his place in the ranks of the devoted, until we had the full number two paces in advance of all the rest, and then it was my uncle said, moving up and down the line as if it pleased him to look on those who were selected for the most perilous venture:

“Gentlemen, it may be that after another hour has passed we shall not meet again on this earth. Therefore I pray you,

those who have any request to make, speak now, that we may remember in the days to come that all you desired was granted."

No man spoke for so long a time as would have taken me to count twenty, and then Gabriel Marion, dear lad that he was, raised his cap courteously, as he bowed and said :

"Major James, if it so be the request we make now be granted, I pray your pardon when I ask a selfish one, which is that us four who have been comrades since I joined the brigade—us four who have eaten and slept together, may not be separated when you shall divide this squad into two. That we may be allowed to go on side by side, as we have from the day I first knew these lads and Gavin Witherspoon."

"It shall be as you say," my uncle replied, and then turning, looked at the others.

Emboldened by Gabriel's speech, one man requested that should he fail to return, evidence might be sent his kinsmen that

he was proud at being able to thus serve the colonies.

Another made a similar request, and so on until perhaps half a dozen had spoken, when all fell silent.

There was no more to be said. It only remained that we march forth to lay down our lives, or to win them, as the case might be.

As for myself, I believed we who were chosen would probably perish in whatsoever of adventure was before us, for I thought then, much as did Gavin Wither-
spoon, that we were to make an attack upon two portions of the town, while the remainder of the brigade, after we were slain, would come in a different direction, and, taking advantage of the diversion caused by our attack, win the day.

It would be a glorious ending of one's life ; yet as I reflected upon it, although not in the least degree wishing I might have been among this third party rather than in the lead, I said to myself that it would

be sweet to live until we had thrown off the king's yoke, for at this moment when we stood face to face with death, almost feeling the great white angel's cold hand upon us, I was as certain we would finally win the victory, however many hirelings his majesty might send upon us, as I was certain that my life might within a very few moments be the penalty of the pride which was within me.

Perchance never in the history of the Carolinas has there at any one time so much of true bravery been shown as we saw then when the only discontent was because one was more favored than another in the permission to offer his life as a sacrifice.

Well, we were not kept long in line after such arrangements had been made as I have described.

Before being dismissed, however, those who were to be left behind would have raised a cheer, but that Captain Horry prevented any such outburst lest scouting

parties of the enemy might be near, and then the final preparations were made without loss of time for the work in hand.

Captain Melton was named as the gentleman who should lead our squad, and Captain Horry given command of the other.

So far as his purpose was concerned, General Marion did not leave us in doubt, claiming, as he said, that we had the right to know exactly what he proposed doing so we might act the more intelligently.

Our squad was to approach the town near White's Bridge, and the other would reconnoiter on the opposite side of the post; but neither was to return, save in case of some serious disaster, until the main attack had been made.

It was not exactly as Gavin Witherspoon had predicted, because we were given no orders to assault the enemy independently; but were to make a detour, each squad half around the post, and in case of any important discovery to send word back immediately to the general.

At the dawn of the following day the brigade was to advance, and at the first alarm, wherever we of the chosen ones might be, we would join the assaulting party in such manner as our commanders thought proper.

All this, as I have said, was told by General Marion himself, and nothing could have given us greater confidence in the adventure than that he should see fit to explain his plans when another commander might have remained silent.

There were no leave-takings; no delay.

Such work as ours was to be done on the instant, and Captain Melton, advancing at the head of our squad, for by this time we had been told off in two parties of twenty, said quietly:

“We will move on foot in such formation as may be most agreeable. As I understand it, our work is rather in the nature of spying than of a military movement, and my only order is that you allow me to lead.”

Captain Horry was already leaving the encampment when we set off, following our commander much as a party of pleasure seekers might troop after him who had promised to show them some desirable place of entertainment, and as we threaded our way through the swamp Gabriel Marion, linking his arm in mine, said cheerily, with never a tremor in his voice to show that the doom of the future lay upon his heart :

“ We four are in rare luck, Robert Sumter. I did not believe my uncle would grant me so great a boon as to call my name, and when yours was spoken by Major James the tears almost came into my eyes, fearing lest you should go while I remained behind.”

CHAPTER XI.

GABRIEL.

I KNOW not how to set down properly such a narrative as this, and, therefore, should be excused for such mistakes as may occur through ignorance and inexperience.

It is with the attack upon Georgetown that I must end this portion of the adventures which befell Percy and myself during the time we served under General Marion, and it may be the story should be continued straight on without any heed whatsoever to those who fought with us, although in the same squad.

Whether it be right or wrong, I cannot well neglect to speak of the part played by that other party of twenty who volunteered their lives as eagerly as did we who followed Captain Melton, and what I write

concerning them must, of course, be from hearsay.

Therefore it seems to me proper to tell first the story of Colonel Horry's squad, as I have heard it related again and again, before attempting to set down that which I know of my own knowledge.

When the forty volunteers were divided into two squads there was no time lost, as I have already said, in setting forward upon that mission which we believed could be fully accomplished only through the sacrifice of us all, and we parted at the limits of the temporary halting place, Captain Melton leading his force to the right, while Colonel Horry began the reconnoiter by bearing to the left.

As to what befell the first squad, this is as I have heard it related :

They continued on through the woods until near to daybreak, when, as Colonel Horry himself has said, and I am now quoting from his official account, he "laid an ambuscade, with my twenty men, near

the road. About sunrise a chair appeared with two ladies escorted by two British officers. I was ready in advance with an officer to cut them off, but reflecting that they might escape, and alarm the town, which would prevent my taking greater numbers, I desisted. The officers and chair halted very near me, but soon the chair went on, and the officers galloped into the town. Our party continued in ambush until 10 o'clock.

“Nothing appearing, and we having eaten nothing for many hours, retired to a plantation not far distant, where I knew were to be found friends. As soon as I entered the house four ladies appeared, two of whom were Mrs. White and her daughter. I was asked what I wanted. I answered, food, refreshment. The other two ladies were those whom I had seen escorted by the British officers.

“The strange ladies seemed greatly agitated, and begged most earnestly that I would go away. I kept my eye on Mrs.

White, and saw she had a smiling countenance, but said nothing. Soon she left the room, and I left it also and went into the piazza, laid my cap, sword and pistols on the long bench, and walked the piazza; when I discovered Mrs. White behind the house chimney beckoning me.

“I got to her undiscovered by the young ladies, when she said: ‘Colonel Horry, be on your guard; these two young ladies are just from Georgetown; they are much frightened, and I believe the British are leaving it and may soon attack you. As to provisions, I have plenty in yonder barn, but you must affect to take them by force.’

“I begged her to say no more, for I was well acquainted with all such matters. We both secretly returned, she to the room where the young ladies were, and I to the piazza I had just left.”

The colonel had no more than gained this point, when the sentinels gave an alarm.

Two musket-shots told him that an enemy was near at hand, and almost immediately afterward the firing became so rapid that he knew an encounter was already begun.

That brave officer thought only of his men, and so nearly were the interests of the squad allied, that he forgot all else save the desire to be with them in the time of danger.

He rushed into the fight, forgetting to take with him even his saber—intent only on being with those who had so well proven their devotion to the Cause.

The British were seventeen in number, well armed, and commanded by a brave fellow named Merritt ; but they were taken by surprise.

The redcoats retreated, but turned in their flight to strike a blow, and our men, believing they had been ordered on even to death, pursued with fatal earnestness.

Of the enemy's force only two men escaped death or capture, and one of these

was the captain, of whom Colonel Horry writes :

“ My men in succession came up with Captain Merritt, who was in the rear of his party, urging them forward. They engaged him. He was a brave fellow. Baxter, with pistols, fired at his breast, and missing him, retired ; Postell and Greene, with swords, engaged him ; both were beaten off. Greene nearly lost his head. His buckskin breeches were cut through several inches. I almost blush to say that this one British officer beat off three Americans. Merritt escaped to a neighboring swamp, from whence, at midnight, he got to Georgetown.”

I would it were possible for me to give as brief an account, with as satisfactory an ending, regarding our portion of the reconnoiter.

As has been said, after crossing White's Bridge the two squads separated, Colonel Horry's going toward the left and ours to the right.

Then it was, as we rode on slowly, mentally nerved for anything which might happen and fully expecting sharp and bloody work at any instant, that Gabriel Marion said, looking first at Percy and then at me :

“ Perhaps it will never again be our good fortune, comrades, to have such an opportunity of proving our metal as has come to us this night. Now I am in no wise eager for death ; but to my mind there is little fear that the end be near at hand. Although the odds are so strongly against us, we shall take this post of Georgetown, and I believe it because my uncle, the major, is a careful, prudent soldier, never taking upon himself chances that are utterly without hope, although many times the fact may have seemed to be the reverse. We shall capture Georgetown, comrades, and if either of us fails to come out alive, we have the proud satisfaction of knowing that whatsoever befalls the Cause our names must live among

those who volunteered everything for freedom."

"I hold to it that this is not the time for such speeches," Gavin Witherspoon said nervously; and had I not known him to be a man of tried courage I should have said that at that moment he was afraid. "These forty men who came forward so gallantly understood full well in what kind of an adventure they were engaged. It does not prove that his courage is the greatest who speaks overly much regarding the future."

"Meaning by such speech, that I had best hold my tongue," Gabriel said with a laugh. "Perhaps you may be right, and yet there is upon me the inclination to speak of what we have ventured, in order that I may be the better able to appreciate life after it has been offered as a sacrifice and refused."

"I guarantee that once we are come out from this expedition, you will need no thought of the past to make you under-

stand that we rode down the very shadow of death, when we crossed yonder bridge, and this I say, not because there is in my mind any foreknowledge of the future, but from what I know regarding the enemy. I realize, without being told, that ours is as desperate an undertaking as men can well imagine."

"I am thinking that your words, Gavin Witherspoon, are as ill-timed as were Gabriel's, for while he spoke of what might be our reward, you are weighing, as it were, the chances against us, and to my mind it is not pleasant," Percy said with an attempt at cheerfulness which I knew full well was forced, and, stepping nearer to the lad, I grasped his hand, an act which, perhaps, gave him as much encouragement as was in my mind to impart.

Gabriel continued to speak of the future, as if he had no part in the present, until word came that each man must hold himself silent because we were come so near

the town that there was good reason for believing the enemy's sentinels might be close at hand.

We straggled on, each as he pleased, although there was some little show of military formation. Captain Melton was allowed to remain in the lead as he had stipulated, but we four comrades took good care not to fall back more than two or three paces, for we were minded to bear the brunt of the first encounter.

I had never before known what it was to advance against an enemy on foot, and the fact of being without a horse gave me a certain sense of uneasiness.

So far as we of these two advanced squads were concerned, there could be no sudden dash ; no spurring forward into the very midst of the enemy. We must fight our way forward slowly, and, as it seemed to me, at a disadvantage.

However, it is true that my courage did not fail me, although my hand trembled with excitement, and my mouth was

parched and dry as if I had been many hours without water.

Gabriel had just thrown his arm over my shoulder, to show the affection which was in his heart for us all, when the thud of horses' hoofs directly in the front told that the enemy were on the alert.

Instantly we were halted, every man in a posture of defense, and I venture to say that there was not one among us who did not wish he was in the saddle.

“Hold steady, boys!” Captain Melton whispered. “Yonder comes the patrol, and it may be they will turn before coming as far as this; but if not, we have our work cut out for us. The enemy must not pass this point lest our friends in the rear be discovered!”

Involuntarily we four had crouched upon our knees in such position that we could use the muskets to good advantage, and thus we remained in the front line while the horsemen galloped nearer and nearer until they were absolutely upon us.

“Fire!” our commander shouted, and from that little squad of crouching figures a line of fire flashed forth into the very nostrils of the animals, causing them to rear and plunge madly, thus diverting our bullets from their targets.

Three saddles were emptied when a full twenty would have been the result of the volley had we fired one minute before, and then every man among us began to reload his weapon with feverish haste, for but few seconds could elapse before the Britishers would charge.

“This is what may be called a real battle!” Gabriel cried exultantly; but no one replied.

Death for many of us was close at hand, and at such a time words do not come readily.

I was ramming home the bullet in my musket when the horsemen again dashed upon us from out the darkness; there came a roar as if a thousand guns had been discharged at the same instant, and

all before me seemed to be a sheet of flame.

Of what followed during the next five or ten minutes I have no clear idea.

Before me reared and plunged the British horses, while here, there and everywhere I heard cries of rage or groans of mortal agony until it was all a hideous, whirling, dancing picture in which I could distinguish only the outlines of my comrades, who held their places bravely.

Side by side we fought against the red-coats, ignorant of the fact that we were alone, and then came the moment when all our muskets were emptied at the same instant.

The horsemen surrounded us ; our weapons were of little service against the sabers of the enemy, and we understood it, although there was no thought of surrender in my mind until Gavin Witherspoon seized me by the arm, shouting in my ear :

“Surrender, lad, surrender ! There is



Gavin seized my arm, shouting in my ear: "Surrender, lad, surrender!"
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neither honor nor glory in dying when our lives are of no avail for the Cause ! ”

Even as he spoke three of the redcoats had clutched Gabriel and Percy.

I allowed my musket, which had been raised as a club, to drop, and immediately I felt, for the first time, the grasp of a Britisher.

We were prisoners. The glory of fighting to the bitter end with the knowledge that in so doing we were opening the way for those in the rear, was denied us, and but for the shame of it I could have wept like a girl.

And yet all this was as nothing compared with what followed.

The troopers were about to disarm us, and some one had fired a torch that we might be the better seen, when Sam Lee—that miserable Tory and renegade—came up from the rear, where most likely he had been skulking during the fighting, and, seeing us, set up a shout of triumph.

“Now have I got you rebels where I’ve been burning to see you?” he cried. “Now we shall see——”

“Is that Sam Lee?” Gabriel shouted, struggling to release himself from his captor’s grasp.

“Ay, and it is the cur who has sold his country, his kinsmen and himself for the king’s gold!” Percy replied. “There is no dishonor in being overpowered by true soldiers in a fair fight; but to have such as that villain alive before one’s eyes is a disgrace.”

“It shall be worse than that to you!” Sam shrieked, “and as for that nephew of the rebel Marion, I——”

“What are you saying?” one of the troopers asked, seizing Sam Lee and shaking him as if to force the reply more quickly. “Is one of these a nephew to the Swamp Fox?”

“Ay, that he is!” Gabriel made answer, stepping forward as far as the hand of the captor would permit. “I am the

nephew of General Marion, and proud indeed of the kinship ! ”

I was looking at the dear lad that instant, having turned my eyes from the scurvy Tory when Gabriel began to speak, otherwise, perhaps, I might have prevented that terrible thing which followed.

While the remainder of the party were looking at the brave lad who stood before them in the glare of the torches, Sam Lee, doubled-dyed villain that he was, rushed upon him with a saber which he had seized from the hand of the trooper.

In the flickering light I saw the gleam of the steel, and before a word of warning could escape my lips, the cruel weapon descended, striking Gabriel full upon the head, sheering its way downward until the dear lad sank a lifeless mass at the feet of that cur who was not worthy to so much as kneel before him.

On the instant it was as if my eyes were blinded by the crimson flood that followed the stroke of the blade. There was a sen-

sation as if all my blood was boiling, and, for the time being, reason left me.

Gavin Witherspoon declares that I wrenched myself free from the trooper who held me, as if the Britisher had been no more than a babe, that at the same instant I leaped upon the Tory murderer, bearing him to the earth till his face was sunk deep in the blood-stained moss, and with the same weapon which had let out the life of the most gallant lad who ever lived, I killed him.

It was done so quickly, Gavin declares, that the redcoats had no time to interfere before the work was accomplished, and while they, horror-stricken as it were by that which was not warfare in any sense of the word, stood before us three—two dead and one senseless, the remainder of our squad fell upon them.

This last attack was successful; the Britishers were beaten off, and our brave fellows carried Gabriel's dear body, and myself, back to the rear.

The attempt to capture Georgetown was a failure, now that the enemy had been warned, and our brigade beat a hasty retreat.

Of all that I know nothing ; it was many days before my senses returned, and then we were encamped on Snow's Island.

It is best that I add to my story what has been written by one who is a master hand at wielding a pen, while I am only a novice, and that I bring this portion of the adventures which befell Percy Sumter and myself to an end, with the promise to write out at some later day what we two did when the work of the patriots was finally crowned with success.

* * * * *

“The murder of Gabriel Marion, with some other instances of brutality and butchery on the part of the Tories, happening about this time, gave a more savage character than ever to the warfare which ensued. Motives of private anger and per

sonal revenge embittered and increased the usual ferocities of civil war; and hundreds of dreadful and desperate tragedies caused the inhabitants to pursue each other rather like wild beasts than like men.

“In the Cheraw district, on the Pedee, above the line where Marion commanded, the warfare was one of utter extermination. The revolutionary struggle in Carolina was of a sort unknown in any other part of the Union.

“The attempt upon Georgetown was defeated. The British had taken the alarm, and were now in strength, and in a state of vigilance and activity which precluded the possibility of surprise. Marion’s wishes, therefore, with regard to this place, were deferred accordingly to a more auspicious season.

“He retired to Snow’s Island, where he made his camp. It was peculiarly eligible for his purposes, furnishing a secure retreat, a depot for his arms, ammunition,

prisoners and invalids—difficult of access, easily guarded, and contiguous to the scenes of his most active operations.

“Snow’s Island lies at the confluence of Lynch’s Creek and the Pedee. On the east flows the latter river; on the west, Clark’s Creek, issuing from Lynch’s and a stream navigable for small vessels; on the north lies Lynch’s Creek, wide and deep, but nearly choked by rafts of logs and refuse timber. The island, high river swamp, was spacious, and, like all the Pedee river swamp of that day, abounded in live stock and provision. Thick woods covered the elevated tracts, dense cane-brakes the lower, and here and there the eye rested upon a cultivated spot, in maize, which the invalids and convalescents were wont to tend.

“Here Marion made his fortress. Having secured all the boats of the neighborhood, he chose such as he needed, and destroyed the rest. Where the natural defenses of the island seemed to require

aid from art, he bestowed it ; and, by cutting away bridges and obstructing the ordinary pathways with timber, he contrived to insulate, as much as possible, the country under his command.

“ From this fortress his scouting parties were sent forth nightly in all directions. Enemies were always easy to be found. The British maintained minor posts at Nelson’s Ferry and Scott’s Lake, as well as Georgetown ; and the Tories on Lynch’s Creek and Little Pedee were much more numerous, if less skilfully conducted, than the men of Marion.

“ Marion’s encampment implied no repose, no forbearance of the active business of war. Very far from it. He was never more dangerous to an enemy than when he seemed quiet in camp.

“ His camp, indeed, was frequently a lure, by which to tempt the Tories into unseasonable exposure. The post at Snow’s Island gave him particular facilities for this species of warfare. He had but to

cross a river, and a three hours' march enabled him to forage in an enemy's country.

“Reinforcements came to him daily, and it was only now, for the first time, that his command began to assume the appearance, and exhibit the force of a brigade.”

THE END



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