



Captain Molly

The Heroine of Monmouth

BY JOHN R. MUSICK

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CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

"But Maurice..."

"Well, the Hindoo and the three being the worst prisoners, are confined in the same compartment. He is with the spies; I saw him talking with them, but let us not talk of Sahib now. I want to ask you something about yourself."

"What do you want?"

"Do you remember your parents?"

"Only very dimly; they died, I have been told, in India. My father was an officer in the English army. My nurse was with me at the time, but she was left in England when my uncle and I sailed for America."

"And did you ever talk with her about your dead parents?"

"I was too small to do so; but she told old Dobbins they died from poison, supposed to be the bite of a cobra. I have a faint recollection of dark faces and horrible serpents all blended in some way with my earliest recollections."

"Do you know your mother's name before she was married?"

"No, sir."

"Your whole early life, then, seems wrapped in mystery?"

"It is a mystery to me. I know little or nothing about it, and do not care to know. All I desire now is Maurice's safety. For that I would give all I have—even my life."

"Have you received no propositions from any one promising his rescue?"

"Yes; Captain Sanford has promised to guarantee his safety if I will consent to marry him."

"Would your lover want his life saved at such a cost?"

"She started and gasped for breath. She remembered what Maurice had told her and shook her head in silence, while tears trickled down her cheeks. The colonel, in a voice that melted with kindness, said:

"Go home, my poor child, and put your trust in heaven. Put off Captain Sanford, for even if you did not already love another, he is not suited for your husband."

Her mysterious friend led her to the door and bade her adieu, and she made her way through the darkness, down the hill.

CHAPTER XIV.

The capture of Fitzgerald, Molly Pitcher and Sam Moulton was the result of bribery and treachery. One whom they trusted had been bought with British gold, and while they slept in fancied security, at the house of a supposed friend, the house was surrounded, they were seized in their beds before either could lay hand on a weapon, and dragged, handcuffed, to the city.

A few days after their capture, the doors of the crowded prison were opened to admit one of the most singular prisoners they had ever seen. He wore the baggy trousers and turban of the Orient, and his face was almost as dark as an African's. This singular personage was none other than Obejah Sahib, the Hindoo conjurer and snake charmer. He was charged with an attempt to murder his master, and was consequently doomed to death as well as the spies.

"Ugh! what a horrible looking fellow be!" thought Molly Pitcher, as she watched him from her narrow cell.

He had been but a few hours in the prison when she saw the Hindoo in earnest conversation with Maurice, and muttered:

"Now, why is Captain Maurice talking with that ebony idol-worshiper?"

That night, while Molly slept with her head near to the door of her cell, there came a light tapping on the grating and a voice whispered:

"Molly! Molly!"

Maurice's cell joined hers on one side and Sam Moulton's on the other. She knew the voice was Maurice's.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Sh—keep very quiet. Put your ear close to the grating. There is a chance for us to make our escape from this place," said Maurice. "Can you inform Sam?"

"Don't know—he sleeps like a log."

Molly remembered that she had a broken broom handle in her cell, and with it could possibly reach the drowsy giant. He was sleeping as soundly as if he had been in his hut at Valley Forge, when there came a sudden pounce in his side, which made him half believe that he had been prodded with a dull bayonet.

He growled out some uncomplimentary remark, and was about to fall once more into the arms of the drowsy god, when Molly said:

"Come closer; I want to tell you a secret."

This was sufficient for Big Sam to be on the alert; he crept nearer to the side of the cell, and lay his head close against the grating between the two.

"Sam, the captain says there is a chance for us to get out of this old prison box."

"How?"

"I don't know the full particulars, but keep your eyes and ears open. The captain knows what he is talking about. He would not raise false hopes to have them dashed to the ground."

Next morning when the four prisoners were let out of their cells into the compartment where they could exercise their limbs they had an opportunity to converse for a few moments at a time. The Hindoo sat in one corner of his cell, glaring at everybody in sullen defiance.

"There is a chance for escape," Maurice said, in a carefully guarded tone. "You must be very cautious and on the watch for the chance when it comes."

"I hope you don't put any reliance in that half-red-skin nigger," observed Molly.

"My father, who served in India, has often said that those jugglers can be depended on," replied Maurice. "Besides, as he is to hang as well as we, why should not our cause be common? He has said he was going to escape, and has promised to take us with him; that is all I know and is sufficient, if true. At

least we should keep a watch for every chance."

The day passed quietly enough in the gloomy old prison. When night came all were again locked in their cells. Maurice had his thoughts on the Hindoo, who had promised them safety. He was wondering if any dependence could be put in his boasted powers. Obejah Sahib belonged to a tribe of conjurers long known to fame. A tribe which had performed such wonders as swallowing swords, escaping from locked doors, vanishing from sight at will, tossing the loose end of a rope into the sky and climbing out of sight, and many other utterly impossible feats. He had heard many stories of them, but had always been slow to believe them.

He suddenly opened his eyes, and by aid of the dim light saw the form of a man in the narrow corridor. His turban and jacket indicated he was the Hindoo, but Maurice could have sworn he saw Obejah Sahib asleep on his bunk. At least there lay a form the exact counterpart of him. Maurice's eyes were very heavy with sleep. It seemed as if some strange substance was burning, filling the air with odoriferous incense calculated to delight and stupefy the senses.

At last he was awakened by a touch. There was no doubt of it now; his cell door was wide open and the Hindoo was standing in the corridor with a wand-like stick in his hand. All the cell doors were opened at the same time, and the three spies, without a word, went into the corridor where the juggler stood. He raised his stick in a mysterious manner, describing a few circles with it, and then motioned them to follow him. They passed near the cell of Obejah Sahib, and a first glance into it showed the Hindoo asleep on his bunk. The quality of this strange man would have caused Maurice to doubt his senses, had not a closer inspection of the cell proven that the turban was only a dirty handkerchief wound about a dirtier pillow, and the form resembling Obejah was only the bed clothing cunningly twisted into an effigy.

They reached the end of the corridor and found the door opened. Just how it was unlocked Maurice and his companions never knew. In the next corridor lay one of the jail sentries insensible, his face ghastly in the imperfect light which fell from the far end of the corridor was a narrow stairway descending to the bottom of the prison under the ground. Here lay two more of the prison guard insensible. The juggler rubbed his hands together and held them over the faces of the insensible men for a second, making their slumber more profound, and led the way down the dark, narrow stairway.

When it grew so dark they scarce could see, Sahib placed another powder in his hand, and, by rubbing the two together, a weird phosphorescent light was emitted which enabled them to follow without danger of falling. At the bottom of the stairway was a great iron door bolted and fast. This door opened into a tunnel through which the prison was drained. Sahib produced some curious instruments and bottles which had been concealed in his turban. Pouring a small quantity of the wonderful acid upon the great iron bars, they began to melt like an icicle held over a blaze, and with a long, slender knife, he cut them through as if they had been dough.

Way was thus made to the tunnel and they followed the strange juggler through a long subterranean passage, almost suffocated by deadly gases and odors, until they came out at the river bank.

After a few whiffs of fresh air, Maurice said:

"Thank heaven, we are free! I can hardly believe it is not a dream."

"Capen, I think we'd better get out of town," said Sam.

Maurice was of the same opinion, but how? At this moment Molly saw a large cake of ice just touching the shore. It had broken from the mainland above, and there were boxes, barrels and cord wood upon it. The idea of concealing themselves among the debris and floating down the river until they reached the city limits was at once suggested to the mind of each, and they leaped on to the ice. Maurice and Sam each seized a pole, pushed from the shore and drifted out into the darkness, just as two soldiers ran down to the water. They fired their guns and raised the alarm, while our friends floated on into the darkness.

Maurice and his escaped friends went to Valley Forge to the Washington, and were very agreeably surprised at the improvement in the army. They were better housed than when he left, and some better clothed, but they were short of provisions and many were still sick. Promises of help from Europe had been made, and all felt more and more encouraged.

CHAPTER XV.

One sunny afternoon Sir John could not resist the temptation to take a stroll down the street. The town was very quiet. The officers were all engaged in preparations for balls and entertainments intended to deride the hated Yankees. Consequently, dressed as a gentleman of the period, a sword at his side and a slender, little ivory-headed cane twirled in his hand, he started out for the walk, finally entering a noted coffee house.

Among those present was a man in the uniform of a colonel in the British army. He was about fifty years of age, with a melancholy cast of countenance. The colonel sat at a table opposite and watched Sir John with the keenest interest for several minutes, before the baronet, conscious of being gazed at, turned, and their eyes met.

"I beg pardon, sir," said the colonel, "but unless I mistake I have seen your face before."

Sir John turned his mild, pleasant eyes fully upon him and answered:

"Such an event is possible."

"Have I not the honor of meeting Sir John Harcourt?"

For a single instant there was a slight

shadow perceptible, but it was gone so quickly it would have taken a shrewd eye to have detected it.

"I have the honor, sir, to be Sir John Harcourt, of Harcourt Hall, America, formerly of England, sir, at your service."

"You had an elder brother?"

"Two, sir. They were twins and there was, for a long time, a question as to which was heir to the estate and title, but at the age of 10, Hugh settled the question himself in favor of his brother Robert; very magnanimous in him, but quite in keeping with the peculiar characteristics of the family."

The officer, after a glance about the room, remarked:

"I would like to form your acquaintance, Sir John. It might be to the mutual advantage of both, but not here; this is no place for us to talk."

Sir John bowed, smiled sweetly and quite agreed with the colonel. But on reaching his own apartment his countenance underwent a great change. There was a look of terror on his face, the expression which the hunted may be supposed to wear, when run to earth.

"It will be to come," he sighed. "I will meet it."

Two days later when old Dobbins came to his apartment with the information that a British officer wished to see Sir John, that worthy knew perfectly well what was coming. Sir John took ample time to school his features, and assure himself that he had perfect control over them before he admitted Col. Roland Chester. He graciously received his visitor, even condescending to offer him a hand to shake, which the colonel, however did not deign to accept. When the door was closed and the two men were alone, the colonel said:

"Sir John, I have come to ask you some questions, and trust you will answer them."

Sir John smiled sweetly and thought that in all probability he would be able to answer all he might ask.

"You were youngest of three sons?"

"Yes, sir; the youngest of three; my brothers were twins."

"Sir Robert, being the eldest, inherited the estate of his father and title of knight first, and next of baronet."

"You seem well posted in the history of my family, colonel."

"Your brothers died almost at the same time, I am told?"

"Not at the same time, my dear colonel; brother Hugh and wife were drowned in the bay the day before my brother, Sir Robert, wife and child died from the poison of a cobra's bite, in their bungalow, near the city of Calcutta. Both brothers were in the English army."

"Of that I am aware. Both were married about the same time, were they not, Sir John?"

"Within a few days of each other," Sir John answered.

"Both had infant daughters?"

Sir John nodded. The colonel studied the face of the man he was questioning, closely, to see if there was any show of his breaking down. But the features were still placid, still undaunted and unconcerned.

"These children were about the same age?"

"About," Sir John answered. "I cannot be particular as to hours in such matters. Both were infants and so near of the same age that one could not readily distinguish any difference in that regard."

"Sir John, you say that your brother, Sir Robert, his wife and child died from the bite of a cobra?"

"Yes, colonel; the records at the post will, I believe, corroborate me."

"And your brother, Hugh Harcourt, a captain in the navy, was drowned in the bay with his wife?"

"True, colonel, and a more unfortunate and sad event never happened. Brother Hugh, both were infants and so near of the same age that one could not readily distinguish any difference in that regard."

"Sir John, if your brother, Sir Robert, had died before Captain Harcourt, who would have inherited the estate in England?"

"My brother, Hugh, certainly."

"Then, according to the laws of England, if your brother Robert had died first, even an hour, the estate would have descended to your brother Hugh, and he, dying, even though but an hour later, the wife would have belonged to his infant daughter."

There was not the least sign of trepidation on the face of the smiling baronet as he answered:

"Colonel, you have shown yourself well versed in the laws of England. I am sure you would be as great a success at law as in the army."

"On the other hand, Sir John, if it had been your brother Hugh's child that had perished with the boat that capsized, and Sir Robert's child that escaped the cobra's bite, it would have been the legal heir to the Harcourt estate."

"Unquestionably."

(To be continued.)

It Was Typical of Hoyt.

In his palmy, happy days almost every act of Hoyt was an anecdote and there are very many of his acts. One that will appeal particularly to theatrical people is told by George Murray.

"Hoyt made many friends and some of them were real fast friends. Two of the fastest in both the affectionate and convivial sense, he took with him in the production of one of his successful comedies, in connection with the business management of the piece. Now, it is true of all theatrical management that there is always rivalry between the man ahead of the show and the 'man back with the show' as to which will be the whole thing. After these two men had been on the road with the company for several weeks a strong rivalry grew up and the man ahead of the show billed himself on the programs as manager and the other as agent. Of course the reduced gentleman 'kicked,' and to settle the dispute, the man who was the whole thing wired Hoyt, in some anger: 'I want to know how I shall bill—on the house programs.' Quick as a flash, the answer came from Hoyt: 'Bill him as excess baggage.—Hoyt.'—Kansas City Star.

Mal de Mer.

Tom—Yes, he was a bit of a rake, but he says he expects to give up everything immediately after he marries her.

Dick—Yes, they contemplate a wedding tour abroad, and he never could stand an ocean voyage.—Philadelphia Press.

St. Matthew, 28.

For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Fear not: for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.

MRS. MANN'S EASTER JACKET.

Now, what are the fashions?" asked Mrs. Allison, in an eager voice.

Little Mrs. Mann had been to the city on a shopping trip, and upon her return her lively neighbor had run in to take an inventory of the newest styles brought from the metropolis; for Mrs. Mann was the oracle par excellence, and led a mode in the pleasant town of Drayton.

"The fashions? Oh, everything is worn! You can't be out of style, Mrs. Allison—that is, in dress goods; for stripes and dots are ever so much changed. They are brought from the metropolis; for Mrs. Mann was the oracle par excellence, and led a mode in the pleasant town of Drayton.

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of her acquaintances upon whose wardrobe she expended twice or thrice the money she indulged herself in.

Sunday morning was never fairer—a pleasant day in April; and when the bell had tolled and "set," and the minister was turning the leaves of the book, preparatory to giving out the first hymn, there was a very perceptible rustle of silk skirts, and Mrs. Allison swept up the middle aisle to her pew. Polley and pride had prompted her tardiness that morning, and it was with quite a conscious flush of gratification that she shook out her flounces and subsided on the pew cushions, confident that half the eyes of the female portion of the congregation had been turned toward her on her ingress. No conqueror, with his laurels fresh on his brow, was ever more delighted than Mrs. Allison.

It was a brilliant sermon the pastor of Drayton church preached that morning; the choir sang a new anthem, and a finer "voluntary" than usual rolled from the keys of the organ.

The male portion of the audience rendered as devout attention as ever; but—alas, that I must record it for the sake of truth, in this narrative—neither the spiritual needs of the world nor the temporal ones received a tithe of the notice from the bonneted part of Parson Primrose's congregation that Mrs. Allison's new Auto-Eton did.

Did you see Mrs. Allison?" asked Julie Bond of her sister, as they descended the meeting house steps after service.

"Yes, and I do believe she had one of those new sacks Cousin Anna wrote us were going to be so fashionable. We must call on her to-morrow, and she'll show it to us, and perhaps lend us the pattern. She's very obliging," replied Sarah.

When Mr. Mann returned from church at noon he found his wife awaiting him at luncheon. She had been detained at home with a sick headache, but just before her husband returned put on her hat and took a stroll around the garden to get the fresh air.

"Maria," said Mr. Mann, "your friend, Mrs. Allison, wore a monkey-jacket to church this morning, and was the observed of all the congregation."

Monday afternoon came. Mrs. Allison's washing fluttered in white clouds from the lines in her yard; and, just as that lady had descended to her sitting room in a neat and becoming dress she heard the peal of her front bell, and opened the door to greet Sarah and Julia Bond, two pretty young girls of the neighborhood.

After pleasant greeting and a warm "Do come in," and "Now, take your things right off," which latter request two "No, I thank yous," were quickly returns, Miss Sarah, the eldest, opened the object of their visit:

"Oh, Mrs. Allison, you don't know how stylish you looked at church yesterday! I do admire your new coat, and I wonder if it isn't the same Cousin Anna wrote us about from New York?"

Mrs. Allison flushed, and looked pleased under this touch of flattery. That was her weak point; she was easily flattered.

"I dare say, Sarah. You know they get the fashions in New York earlier than anywhere else. These Auto-Etons are a stylish garment, I think, and something so entirely new."

"There! I couldn't remember the name," said Sarah Bond, quickly. (She also forgot to add that she never heard it before.) "But I did admire yours, and I saw half the congregation eying you, and I told Julia we'd call over and I knew you'd be willing to let us see it. You do have such pretty things, Mrs. Allison."

"Oh, certainly," echoed the lady, quite won by this further flattery; "I'll bring it down." And she started up stairs for it.

As she took the garment from its peg in the closet, Mrs. Mann's warning—"Don't show it," flashed across her mind; but she hesitated only a moment. "It isn't showing her pattern, for I sent that home as soon as I cut mine out," she said, by way of reconciling herself. "But I'll only show mine to the Bond girls; they're so pleasant and agreeable I should dislike to refuse them, and I'm so intimate with them, too."

The garment was taken to the sitting room and pounced upon by the two young ladies in quest of the newest fashion, and pronounced "sweet," and "stylish," and "neat," in one breath.

"Now, girls, I'll tell you what you can do!" said Mrs. Allison. "You can cut over your circular capes and come out with new Auto-Etons. You never would believe that mine was made of that cloth circular I had last year? but it was; and yet it is just as good as a new one."

"Oh, we're so much obliged! We didn't expect to borrow it!" said Miss Sarah. "You are so kind, Mrs. Allison."

"There, don't say a word, nor refer anybody to me, my dear!" replied Mrs. Allison, benevolently producing the pattern. "You can cut one by it, and return mine. Don't hurry, girls!"

"I knew we could get the pattern of her," said Sarah Bond, as they gained the sidewalk. "Well, if hers was got out of that old cape—I never'd have told of it—we can have far handsomer ones, for our capes are heavier cloth. I shall let Kate Houston have the pattern, Julie;

she can cut over that gray circular of hers."

"But you know Mrs. Allison charged you not to lend it, Sarah!" said Julia.

"Oh! I don't intend to lend her pattern; but I can do as I please with my own! Of course I wouldn't let everybody have it—but Kate's got a new jacket pattern that I want, and I'll exchange with her."

Mrs. Allison's conscience smote her a little after her callers departed.

"But, there, Mrs. Mann never'll know but the Bond girls' cousin Anna sent them the pattern. I charged them not to mention me!" And thus she dismissed the subject.

Poor little Mrs. Mann! The fatal sisters who held the warp and woof of events in their hands, plying the shuttle that weaves the web of destiny, seemed inexplicably unkind to the poor little lady.

On Easter Sunday Mrs. Mann was comfortably seated in church, with hymn book in hand, when up the aisle swarmed Mrs. Allison's cousin Anna sent them the pattern. I charged them not to mention me!" And thus she dismissed the subject.

Poor little Mrs. Mann! The fatal sisters who held the warp and woof of events in their hands, plying the shuttle that weaves the web of destiny, seemed inexplicably unkind to the poor little lady.

The Easter voluntary aroused Mrs. Mann from her painful stupor. Hymn books were lifted, leaves fluttered, the psalm was read, the psalm was played, the congregation rose. Mrs. Mann turned to face the choir, and three pews behind her stood Kate Houston, in a gray Auto-Eton.

When the congregation sat down, little Mrs. Mann sat down, too, in a bewildered sort of way. Was she a Drayton church or in the fashionable city store, where she had seen dozens of these new garments on the lay figures?

But the last drop was added when presently she collected herself to lift her eyes to good Parson Primrose. There, right within the angle of her vision, sat Mrs. Heady, with a puffed crown, ashes of rose silk hat, and a city visitor beside her, wearing another!

"Maria," said her husband, with a smile lurking about his handsome lips as they walked home from church behind the two last-mentioned ladies, "I suppose those are the new style bonnets you spoke of as something new."

Poor Mrs. Mann, no response came from her lips.

HOLY MARVEL OF EASTER DAY.

"You have heard, my boy, of the One who died, Crowned with keen thorns and crucified; And how Joseph the wealthy—whom God rewarded— Cared for the corpse of the martyred Lord, And piously tumbled it within the rock, And closed the gate with a mighty brow."

"Now, close by the tomb, a fair tree grew, With pendulous leaves and blossoms of blue; And deep in the green tree's shadowy breast A beautiful singing-bird on her nest, That was ordered with mosses like maize— And held four eggs of an ivory white."

"Now when the bird from her dim recess Beheld the Lord in his burial dress, And looked on the heavenly face so pale, And the dear feet pierced by the cruel nail, Her heart now broke with a sudden pang, And out of the depth of her sorrow she sang:

"All night long, till the moon was up, She sat and sang in her moss-wreathed cup A song of sorrow, as wild and shrill As the homeless wind when it roams the hill; So full of tears, so loud and long, That the grief of the world seemed turned to song."

"But soon there came, through the weeping night, A glimmering angel, clothed in white; And he rolled the stone from the tomb away, Where the Lord of the earth and the heaven lay; And Christ arose in the cavern's gloom, And in living luster came from the tomb."

"Now the bird that sat in the heart of the tree Beheld the celestial mystery, And its heart was filled with a sweet delight, And it poured a song on the throbbing night; Notes climbing notes, still higher, higher, They shoot to heaven like spears of fire."

"When the glittering white-robed angel heard The sorrowing song of that grieving bird, And heard the following chant of mirth, That hailed Christ risen from the earth, He said, 'Sweet bird, be forever blest! Thyself, thy eggs, and thy moss-wreathed nest.'"

"And ever, my boy, since that blessed night, When death bowed down the Lord of light, The eggs of that sweet bird change their hue, And burn with red, and gold, and blue; Reminding mankind, in their simple way, Of the holy marvel of Easter Day."

First Chicken—Me father came from Shanghai.

Second Chicken—Huh! that's nothing. Me mother was an oll stove from Paris.—Leslie's Weekly.

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