

We thus silently passed on from shadow to stretch of moonshine, and as the slope fell we came on the cobbler's cabin.

I was in a cold sweat that moment, wondering if Pringle indeed might be there. What if he shouldn't be? But, keeping my eye on my prisoner, I knocked at first regularly and then more insistently.

I believe there is a fortune favoring him who dares, for presently a voice sounded:

"Who's there?"

"I, Mordaunt. You know me, Pringle?"

He knew my voice indeed. The door fell back, and a little, wiry man looked out on us, at first staring at sight of my prisoner.

"The colonel," said I.

"Yes, I, Pringle. I'll have you hung some day."

"Not today, sir," said the cobbler, motioning us in.

"I am his prisoner," said the colonel rather savagely.

"In New York," said Pringle.

"Yes, if you get away," he said.

"It's my business to attend to that," the cobbler retorted. "As it is I was about to cross in an hour."

"But your boat?" the prisoner asked wonderingly.

"Tis down there in the bushes," he said.

"But the patrols?"

"I know the password. I'm on Sir Henry's business."

"What treachery!" he cried. "What treachery!"

"You can't depend on men in a town so divided as this, Colonel Van Halo," the cobbler said grimly, "and the meaning of that word treachery depends on the side you're on."

"I've found that out," said the prisoner rather bitterly. "I can't call them all a set of rascally traitors when families like the Mordaunts are so much concerned," and he bowed courteously to me.

I bowed back, acknowledging his, and we stood together in that cabin, an oddly assorted trio. Here was the little cobbler himself—one of those whom civil war makes into daredevils; here was the proprietor a prisoner in our hands, and here was the still uncertain enterprise of taking him to the boat and of getting the boat across to Paulus hook. That moment, as well as chance had carried the enterprise, 'twas nothing to gamble on.

The colonel's bright apprehensive eyes studied us as we talked it over together. Now I wonder if I have made his resistance to me appear too small. As I have said, he always was held a brave man, but this emergency, with his need of sudden action, had made him rather a coward. Yet you can't call a man a coward in that phrasing. 'Tis a term that plays both ways. Do they not say that the bravest soldiers run in their first battles, and why should not a brave man make his resistance rather less because he never had been a prisoner so taken by a desperate escaped prisoner and held now as well by a spy whose life would be the forfeit of the British knowledge of his business? And indeed Colonel Van Halo had resisted me well in that sharp tussle. Even if then I had thrown the pistol down he reasoned that we were desperate men when bandaged together. To all these considerations was added his amazement at discovering not only Pringle's real trade, but more, that this obscure civilian knew the word of the night and could pass the river. Who could have given it? he was asking himself.

"You will not spy much longer, fellow," he observed to Pringle.

"I am not the only one in New York," the cobbler retorted. "You yourself will have seemed?"

The proprietor's face turned ashen, and I interrupted:

"None of that. I have promised to see Colonel Van Halo returned."

"Without an exchange?"

"Without an exchange," said I. "I have given my word."

"Why not leave him here if that's the case? We can bind and gag him and lock him in. But, you see, Mr. Mordaunt, this spoils my business."

"You will have to get some other," said I. "Turn schoolmaster, for I've heard you were once half schoolmaster, half cobbler. As for the other matter, Colonel Van Halo crosses the river with us."

"A matter of pride, eh?" said the cobbler. "Shall we bind and gag you, colonel?"

"I will cry out," said he, "if you don't."

"Why not in my company?" said I.

"There were no sentinels near enough before you could have killed me, but on the river the patrol will hear and catch you."

"Yes," said I. "You must tie his hands—no, that's not needful. Gag him, Pringle."

The prisoner looked about as if meditating resistance, but he saw it was useless, as I took his pistol and held it over him, while Pringle proceeded to gag him, muttering something low in his ears.

The candle in the rough room flickered on the scene. An old rheumatic dog rose laboriously from his corner and sniffed at the prisoner. Pringle slipped a band about his wrists and then snuffed the candle.

"You'll walk, colonel, or we will carry you."

He walked without demur, and we left by a little path where the thick bushes swept our faces. The moon was low on the horizon, and the night soon would fall dark, but Pringle, if once on the river, did not fear light so much. To Sir Henry he was a spy on us; to us one on Sir Henry. He was constantly going to and fro.

Presently we found the skiff. The prisoner entered without resistance. We put out. The cobbler extended me a second pair of ears. He was surprisingly strong in the way of those little wiry men, men who have, too, astonishing endurance, as I have known many times on long campaigns.

The moon had dipped, and the landscape fell suddenly darker. A frigate loomed to leeward, and then we settled down to our steady work. A dog bayed dismally, and my heart beat again wildly over this part of the adventure. I had succeeded so far by an extraordinary association of chances, but I felt ominous. I watched the still figure of our prisoner, who without that gag might have spoiled all by a shout to the shipping.

But the lights of that shipping fell behind when suddenly a challenge fell on our ears as the patrol loomed up. The men backed and leaned on their oars. Pringle gave his own name and the word. They seemed accustomed to his presence on the river at night.

We had drawn on some distance when a voice rang out with shrill distinctness:

"An escaped prisoner—a spy! Stop them!"

I had not noticed our prisoner for some moments, but now, looking around at this startling interruption, I saw him upright, his arms unfettered, the gag out of his mouth. For an instant he stood there poised, and then sprang into the river.

"To your oars, man! 'Tis life or death!" sang out the spy. And I understood him.

We pulled on for our lives, knowing they must stop to pick him up. Yet the chance was small enough. What was the surprising part was that when they had drawn him out of the river they did not seem to be hurried. They came after us, to be sure, but not so briskly as they might.

"God bless the colonel!" said Pringle. I did not think of that then. Freedom, for which I had fought so hard, was of import enough to make me forget all else. Not till some time after, when we grounded under the cliff on our own side of the river and we were walking as briskly as we could toward Major Lee's pickets, did I remember and ask:

"What did you mean by that, Pringle?"

"The colonel, sir, told them the truth and that they should let us get away."

"Let us get away?" I asked.

"Yes, you see I whispered in his ear, while he was gagging him, that I wouldn't tie him tight."

"What d'ye mean, man?" I cried.

"That's traitorous to us."

"Mr. Mordaunt," he answered, "once when I needed money that gentleman helped me out. That was before this blessed war. In this case I intended giving him a chance."

I said nothing, thinking it all over, while the spy went on.

"If it were traitorous, can't I show you 100 cases where I've risked my neck? Now I never can go into New York again till congress holds it."

Still I said nothing, thinking it over.

"A man must be human, even in war. I gave him only a little chance. He might have been drowned, but he took it," the spy went on with sullen persistence. "If he'd been brought over, he would have had the appearance of having helped you."

At last I said:

"I don't see why I should report this."

Then he cried out:

"Why, bless you, Captain Mordaunt, I will report it myself. If they don't think I deserve some consideration, they can go and be hanged."

The cobbler's thin, wiry figure seemed to me to take on heroic proportions as we walked there together in that still, dark hour. If he had lost me my prisoner, the prisoner equally had let me escape. And, in fact, when the matter was reported at headquarters, without an extenuating clause, the same view was taken of it, and Pringle was continued in the service with the rank of sergeant.

So the account ends as abruptly as it began, but it may show perhaps the characters of the runaway prisoner, of the old Tory and of the spy, who, during the usage of war, could not forget to favor—even though granted by a political enemy.

THE END.

The Rural Trolley Car.

The conductor and the motorman are also of types different from their city brethren. They come from the neighboring countryside, and they call each other by their front names—Obed and Ezekiel, or other premonitions of that sort.

An old lady who had all her life been the autocrat of the village in the Old Colony, and who set out to take her first trip on the trolley car which passed her door, found, after she had gone something like a half mile on the way, that she had forgotten her gloves. She at once ordered the conductor to turn back. Accustomed, like all his fellow villagers, to yield unquestioning obedience to commands from that quarter, he held a brief conference with the motorman. The car then reversed its course, halted before the old lady's gate and waited until she waddled into the house and up stairs to get her gloves on the bureau drawer, and then came back again, the other passengers, with the national docility of the American people, submitting uncomplainingly to the delay.—Sylvester Baxter in Harper's Magazine.

SPANISH GRANDEES.

FAMILY PEDIGREES THAT RUN BACK TEN CENTURIES.

The National Vanity Borders on the Absurdly Grotesque, and Playing the Gentleman Has Been Called "the Endemic Disease of Spain."

It is related that a young guard, having neglected to pay the usual salute to a Spanish duke at the court of Madrid, excused himself by saying that he did not know the offended nobleman's rank.

"My friend," replied his grace, "the safe rule is to assume that everybody in the palace who looks like a monkey is a grandee of the first class."

The truth is the Spanish are a thoroughly mongrel race, and their conceit of themselves amazes us. Their country has probably been often overrun and conquered than any other territory of equal extent in Europe. Phœnician, Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, Visigoth and Moor have all successfully made it their stamping ground, and the effect of all this upon the pure Castilian blood, whatever that may be, is indelibly stamped on every really Spanish face.

But playing the gentleman has been called "the endemic disease of Spain," and the national vanity is something grotesque. One of their historians seriously advanced the theory that the first inhabitants of the country "arrived by air," so impressed was he by their superhuman qualities that nothing short of a descent from the sky could account for them. A subsequent historian, however, after a long and grave discussion of the question, finally announced his opinion that "they more probably came by land."

After this we need not be astonished that the Spanish claim to possess the oldest families in Europe. The surprising circumstance is that the claim is not wholly without foundation. Their family names can in some cases be traced back to an incredibly remote period, though it must not be assumed that the original blood persists in any purity.

Probably the most ancient family in Spain is the house of Pacheco, whose estates are not far from Cartea, now called Cartaya, in Andalusia. Plutarch tells us that when Crassus fled from Italy he concealed himself for eight months at Ximena, near Cartea, in caves belonging to a Spanish gentleman named Patecus. Cicero also mentions this generous Spaniard, and there can be no doubt that he was one of the ancestors of the Pacheco family, whose name is obviously derived from his and who still own the caves. This carried them back about 2,000 years, to a period antedating the Christian era, but it is possible to trace the line much further. The name is clearly of Phœnician origin, being ultimately derived from "patacoi," the word by which the Tyrians designated the carved figurehead of their galleys.

The identification is made more complete by the fact that the Phœnicians were the founders of Cartea, as of Cadiz in the same province. That adds another 1,000 years or so to the Pacheco pedigree. Think of it—a landed estate remaining in the possession of the same family for 3,000 years! This is doubtless the most wonderful family tree in the world and unusually well authenticated. The Pachecos may well be pardoned for taking pride in it, though it roots in rather unsavory soil at last, for the great original Pacheco was evidently a Tyrian freebooter.

Names that trace back to the Carthaginian occupation in the time of Hannibal are also found, and the title of Hannibal's own clan, Barca, is perpetuated by the Barcias and Garcias, well known families of Andalusia. There are also several names of Roman antecedents, as Ponce and Cane, in Latin Pontius and Canius. A Spanish gentleman bearing the latter name was a personal friend of the poet Martial, all of which seems to bring antiquity very near—in Spain. The fact of the matter is she has never emerged from antiquity.

The Spanish, however, are inclined to look back to the Goths as "the purest fountain of nobility." This certainly seems a strange perversion of sentiment, for of all the barbarians that came down from the north to lay waste Roman civilization with fire and sword the Goths, with their cousins, the Vandals, were the most irredeemably villainous.

And these Goths were no extraordinary heroes either, even in war. With supine and braggart incompetency they lost to the Moors in the eight months' campaign a supremacy which it cost eight centuries of conflict to regain. Yet "Gothic of Spain" is the pet phrase.

To a rank outsider it would seem that the Basque families have the most honorable lineage, and their pedigrees run back to time immemorial, though not easily traceable. The Basques represent the original population of the Spanish peninsula. Their seat is the mountains of the northern district, and in many ways remind us of our American Indians, although it is found more or less all over the world. The termination "ez," so common in Spanish names, is Basque, and signifies "son," as Perez, son of Peter, exactly like our own Peterson.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

A Light Luncheon.

Bill—Did you ever try any of Small's 25 cent dinners?

Jill—Yes; I ate three of them today at noon.—Youkers Statesman.

WHAT THE MATTER WAS.

Little Game of Two Choir Members Which the Minister Spoiled.

A minister's widow tells this:

"My husband," she said, "had brown eyes that turned deeply, darkly black when he was angry, and which danced with most miraculous merriment when he was amused. Naturally, in the course of a long life with him, I came to know the varying expression of those eyes pretty well. I used to watch his eyes when he was preaching to know how things were going with him and, incidentally, with the congregation. I remember once in the midst of a most earnest discourse to have seen him stop suddenly for the space of a minute, not more, his eyes growing strangely black, then brightening again with that irresistible twinkle, though the rest of his features remained quite grave throughout. As I said, I was only for a moment; then he resumed his sermon as before."

"What was the matter?" I asked when church was out and we were on our way home.

"Why, I came so near laughing out in church that there was no fun in it," he said. "Of course the choir is hidden from the congregation behind its protecting screen in the rear of the church, but it chanced to be exactly in my line of vision as I stand on the rostrum. When I stopped in my sermon today, it was because I happened to glance choirward and saw our new soprano and new tenor having a quiet game of cards behind the screen. They must have felt my gaze upon them, for when they looked up and caught my eye those cards disappeared so suddenly and mysteriously I thought that in spite of everything I should burst out laughing."

—Philadelphia Times.

ORIGINAL TACTICS.

Unique Manual of Arms Prepared by "Extra Billy."

The most remarkable company of soldiers ever drilled in this country fought under "Extra Billy" Smith, twice governor of Virginia. He acquired the nickname through connection with the extensive mill contracts which he had before the war, his charge to the government of "extra work" on his routes being so frequent and large as to keep the postoffice department in a state of constant ferment.

He was a grand old man of the rough, honest type of "Blue Jeans" Williams, Lincoln, Thurman, Jerry Rusk, Crawford and Jenkins. His education had been sadly neglected, but he owned brains to spare and horse sense enough for three ordinary governors. He drilled his men according to "Extra Billy's Tactics," an unpublished manual of arms.

A drill lesson: Colonel "Extra Billy"—Now, boys, git yo'selves in pershion. Are yo' ready? Tote arms! Deliver arms! Rest yo' muskets! Tote arms! Ground yo' rifles! That's tol'ble good. Are you ready again? Well, here we go. Fix yo' stickers! (Fix bayonets.) Now charge 'em and stick 'em!

One day he led his men into a blind lane about a mile long, and arriving at the end could not see his way out except by tearing down fences and going through a wheatfield guarded by an angry farmer with a dangerous looking gun. The objective point was the opposite side of the field. After studying gravely the situation he gave the order, "Disband, boys, an meet me tomorr mornin on the tother side of the field whar we aimed to git this evening."—Kansas City Journal.

A Military Trick.

One of our German-American citizens related the following incident of the German revolution of 1848:

"We were short of men and had a large number of prisoners to look after. That did not worry us as long as we were not moving, but one day we had to make a forced march. The country through which we were to pass was hostile, and extreme watchfulness was necessary. We had few enough men as it was, and we knew that those prisoners were ready to make a dead run at the first opening."

"Finally a young officer made a brilliant suggestion, and it was promptly carried out. We ripped the suspender buttons from the prisoners' trousers, took away their belts and knew we had them. Their hands were busy after that, and fast running was out of the question. We made the march safely, and I do not believe that even Yankee ingenuity could have invented a simpler solution."—New York Tribune.

A Useful Mule.

"Tom, that old sway backed mawl o' yours ain't no good under a saddle, is he?"

"Nope; too slow an clumsy."

"Ner in th' buggy er waggin?"

"Nope; too awkward for that."

"Ner at pullin on the plow?"

"Nope; wants ter graze too much."

"What you keepin him fer, then?"

"Waal, you see, we ain't got no clock at our house, an that ole mawl brays at dinner time jest ez shore ez the yearth turns over. Yassar, I've been called to dinner by that mawl's bray for the last five years an I'm allus right plum on time."—Atlanta Journal.

Well Rebuked.

It is recorded of a young fop who visited one of the Rothschilds that he was so proud of his malachite sleeve buttons that he insisted upon exhibiting them to his host.

The latter looked at them and said: "Yes, it is a pretty stone. I have a mantelpiece made of it in the next room."

Nature has given us two ears, two eyes and but one tongue, to the end that we should hear and see more than we speak.—Socrates.

A whale of 50 tons weight exerts 145 horsepower in swimming 12 miles an hour.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MOTHERS.

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March 8, 1897. Samuel Pitcher, M.D.

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