

MY CAPTIVE.

By JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER,
Author of "A Soldier of Manhattan,"
"The Sun of Saratoga," Etc.

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CHAPTER X
IN MORGAN'S CAMP

Then we proceeded to the encampment, and Colonel Washington himself went with us, his plans being changed by my news. My head was buzzing with excitement. We were going to fight Tarleton at last, though with all the odds against us, numbers, discipline and arms, while Tarleton himself had won his reputation as the ablest and most successful cavalry commander in the British service. We might again, experience the disgrace and disaster of Camden, but Morgan was no Gates, and perhaps, on the other hand, we might equal the exploit of the wild borderer at King's Mountain, though it was a little too much to hope for that. But still we would fight, and to a young man it always seems better to fight than to run.

"Old comrade," I said to my horse, "we fight the enemy tomorrow!" He nodded joyously and then looked gravely at the bandage around my head. "It is nothing," I said. "I will take it off tonight. My head is well."

He nodded again, as if all his troubles were over.

The wife of Captain Dunn of the South Carolina militia was in the camp, a lady whom I knew, my distant kinswoman, and Julia was given into her charge.

"Take good care of her, Cousin Anna," I said. "Remember that she is my prisoner."

"Your prisoner, is she?" she replied enigmatically. "But remember, Philip, that the captor often becomes the captive."

"Cousin Anna," I said indignantly. "I hope you are not going to preach our defeat by Tarleton on the very eve of battle. It will have a discouraging effect."

"I said nothing about the battle. Go and attend to your work, Philip. I will take care of the girl."

To Julia I said: "We fight tomorrow, and I may not see you again."

Then I bent down and kissed her lips. She replied very simply and earnestly: "May you live through it, Philip!"

Cousin Anna's back was turned, and she did not see or hear.

I turned away and began to examine the camp and this field, destined to be the scene of a memorable battle which was itself the opening of one of the greatest, most skillful and successful campaigns ever conducted on the soil of our continent.

We were on a long slope, consisting of several hills rising above each other like the seats of an amphitheater, though at a much greater elevation, as the slope was so slight that it offered no impediment to the gallop of a horse. The men were gathering up old rails, which they were using for the campfires, and I noticed many old tracks of the feet of animals. To my question one of the men said:

"We are going to fight where the cows pastured. Don't you know that this army is camped on the cow pens of a very worthy man named Hannah? And these rails are the last that are left of his pens."

Behind us flowed the wide, deep and unfathomable Broad river, retreat thus being cut off in case of defeat. I asked the meaning of this strange military maneuver which meant either victory or destruction, and again the explanation was ready:

"More than half of our men are militia, and you can never tell whether militia will run like rabbits or fight like devils. All early signs fail, and General Morgan says it's cheaper to have the river behind us and make 'em fight than to station regulars in the rear to shoot down the cowards."

Presently I saw General Morgan himself passing among the men and preparing for the expected attack in the morning. This was one of our real heroes, a fighter and leader and no politician, a man whom the great Washington esteemed and loved to reward. I had seen him at Saratoga and elsewhere, and his figure as well as his name always drew attention. Over feet high and built in proportion, with a weight of 200 pounds, and a large, fine, open face, he was a type of the true American, the best of all men in mind and body.

There was plenty of provender in the camp, and I gave Old Put the first solid meal that had come to him in several days. I wanted him to be in good trim for the morning, for he and I were to take our proper place with Washington's cavalry, to which we belonged, only a handful of men, but able and true and capable of doing great things in the nick of time. There had been some question about the bandage on my head, which I wore as a precaution against taking cold in the scalp wound, but I showed that it was only a trifle, and Colonel Washington rightfully remarked that such a slight wound would only increase a man's efficiency on the battlefield. Then he presented me with a fine saber, which I needed badly, and told me to lie down on the ground and go to sleep, but I could not sleep just then, and with the freedom of our colonial armies I roamed about the encampment.

The campfires flared up in the cold January darkness. The men sat around them, talking and playing, cards with old greasy cards or singing the songs of the hills and the woods. Some of the soldiers were asleep on their blankets or the bare ground, for we were always a ragged and unhusbanded army at the best, and only a few of the officers had tents.

A sharp breeze came from across the river, and the flames bent to it, their light flickering over wild, brown faces

that knew only the open air, wind, rain, hail or whatever came. Most of them still carried their curved and carved powderhorns and their bullet pouches, inseparable companions, over their shoulders, and their long, slender barreled rifles, so unlike the British muskets, lay at their sides.

Smoke rose from the fires and blew in the faces of the men, deepening the brown and giving them another shade of the Indian. A curse mingled now and then with the singing and the talk of the card players, and from the borders of the camp came the stamp of the horses and an occasional neigh. In the darkness, half lighted by the reeling fires, the camp became a camp of wild men, whose faces the wavering light molded into whatever grotesque images it chose.

We were but a little army, only 900 strong, but many of us had come great distances and from places wide apart. An arc of 1,000 miles would scarce cover all our homes. There were the militia, South Carolinians and Georgians, raw troops, whom one can never trust; then the little remnant of the brigade that De Kalb had led on the fatal day of Camden, splendid soldiers whose line the whole British army could not break, the survivors now eager to avenge the disgrace their brethren suffered on that day, then the staunch Virginia troops, that we knew would never fail, and near them our two or three score of cavalrymen under Washington—a little army, I say again, but led by such leaders as Morgan, Washington, Howard and Pickens! Down the slopes the sentinels were on watch, but there was no fear of a surprise, for the scouts were just bringing in word that Tarleton could not come before daylight, and then, owing to the slope and the open ground, his approach would be seen for a great distance.

The new men talked the most, some about the coming battle, eagerly, volubly, others about things the farthest from it, but in the same eager, voluble, unrefined tone. The veterans were silent mostly, and already with the calm and hardihood of long usage were seeking the rest and sleep which they knew they would need. A tall, thin man, with a wild face, whom I took to be one of the preachers at the great revival meetings so common on the border, rose in the midst of the camp and began to speak. Some listened, and some went on with the talking and card playing. I could hear the rustle of the pasteboard as the cards were shuffled. He was a fighting preacher, for he exhorted them to strike with all their strength in the coming battle and if they must die to die like Christian heroes. He prayed to God for the success of our arms, then stepped down from the stump on which he had stood and disappeared from my sight. He fought in the front line of the South Carolina militia the next day.

I sought my own place in our troop and lay down upon one half of my blanket, with the other half above me. Old Put gnawed at some fodder beside me.

"Wake me up in the morning when you see the first red gleam of the British coats, old comrade," I said, and knowing that he would do it, I closed my eyes.

But sleep would not come just yet, and I opened my eyes again to see that the fires were sinking and the darkness was coming down nearer to the earth. Half the men were asleep already; the others were quiet, seeking sleep, and the steady breathing of near 1,000 men in a close space made a strange, whistling noise like that of the wind. A flaring blaze would throw a streak of light across a sleeping soldier, showing only a head or a leg or an arm, as if the man had been disoriented. I would hear the faint rattle of a sentry's firelock and the heavy hoof of a horse as he crowded his comrades for room. An officer in dingy uniform would stalk across the field to see that all was right, and over us all the wind moaned and the darkness gathered close up to the edge of the dying fire. Weakness overpowered my excited brain, and I slept.

[CONTINUED.]

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HAIL THE SPEEDWAY

AN AMERICAN INSTITUTION THAT HAS COME TO STAY.

A Lasting and Far-reaching Benefit to Any Progressive City—Successful Precedents Established—How to Obtain a Speedway.

When the horse owners and drivers of New York city and vicinity succeeded in obtaining the magnificent speeding course along the Harlem river, they little knew what widespread effects their action would have. The enthusiasm which prevailed at the opening of the speedway in 1897 and the renewed interest in all matters relating to good horsemanship grew more pronounced as time passed on, and it was not very long before cities in all parts of the United States made known their intention to provide a special stretch for the devotees of fast driving. Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco were among the first of the larger cities to follow New York in the actual building and setting aside for the special purpose of a speedway. Scores of other cities of lesser importance, however, at later dates agitated the question, and many have since become successful.

The advantages accruing to a city of a town from the possession of a speedway are numerous and convincing. It is doubtful if a more beneficial adjunct to a live, up to date community has ever been brought to light in recent years. One of the greatest accompanying advantages is the inevitable rise in the value of the realty holdings in the neighborhood of the course. Property of practically no worth whatever for other purposes can be readily made available and placed on the market at a good figure as a site for a driveway, and directly resultant is the increase in the value of the surrounding territory. The individual landowners are not the only beneficiaries. The town, county and state in which they live also come in for their share of the gains. The county places a higher tax assessment on property in question and so replenishes its coffers, while the town and state gain by the influx of people attracted and the variety of interest created by the founding of the new institution. The amount of money brought into a town by a speedway is an important consideration.

A noticeable example of the effect of the establishing of a speedway in a locality before deemed unsuited for any good purpose is afforded by the New York city speeding stretch. The visitor who had not seen the lengthy expanse in ten years would scarcely recognize the place today. What was then a rough, unattractive spot of wilderness has been transformed into a beautiful park extending for two miles along the Hudson river.

While no other city in the country controls the wealth represented by New York, yet there are hundreds of communities that could construct a speedway on a less elaborate scale and still derive much benefit therefrom. Bayonne, N. J., has proved this. Less than a year ago a mile and a half straightway, parallel with the well known Hudson county boulevard, was reserved for the use of the horsemen, and the crowds seen there daily bear ample testimony as to its popularity. The business man finds recreation and relaxation from engrossing cares while whirling through the frosty atmosphere at a brisk pace, and the man who drives because of an inherent love of the horse finds unalloyed enjoyment.

There are many methods by which a speedway may be obtained. The establishment of the various driveways through the country has brought to light a variety of schemes. Each line of action has advantages according to the circumstances governing and influencing the actions of the persons concerned. The existence of boards of park commissioners in various counties throughout the different states has proved of great service to speeding enthusiasts. Through the medium of these boards whole sections of land have been set aside for the special use in Philadelphia was procured in this manner, and although the commissioners themselves are said to be the most frequent patrons of the speedway, yet their reserving of the land was undoubtedly a disinterested action. San Francisco's beautiful speedway in Golden Gate park, more than a mile in length and 130 feet wide, was also got from park commissioners. If a city has an association or club of horsemen strong enough financially, a speedway can be built at the expense of the organization, making it entirely a private enterprise, or the procurement of special legislation might possibly be within the scope of an influential body of men. There is hardly a state legislature in the land that would not favor a bill introduced to further a plan so plainly a benefit to the commonwealth in general.

Another plan is to prevail on the local municipal government to permit the utilization of outlying roads in sparsely settled parts or to have the county board set aside a part of some disused thoroughfare in the county. There is hardly a section in the whole United States where one or more of these suggestions regarding the getting of a speedway could not be followed with success.

There is no doubt that the speedway has come to stay. It is an American institution and is typical of its progressive nature of its originators. Its value is very plain to the American people, and it is probable that the twentieth century will witness the erection of speedways in or near every city laying claim to importance.

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