

# The Trail of a Traitor

By C. C. HOTCHKISS

Copyright—The Frank A. Munsey Company.

"I am, sir. I have been within the rebel lines for two weeks or more; but, unfortunately, my papers and memoranda were all taken from me when I was captured. I have had a narrow escape from hanging." And, as I had done before Simcoe, I told an apparently straight story, answering the questions he put to me with a promptness that surprised myself. I was breathing easier then.

"Sir," he finally said, fixing me with his black eye, "I understand that you have had no hint of any plan leading toward the capture of—of my person."

"I have not, general," I answered, letting go the life with a straight face. "And did you chance to see the—commander-in-chief?"

"I saw Mr. Washington a number of times—at a distance."

Arnold dashed his hand violently to the arm of his chair as if the name had aroused him. "A most overrated person, sir!" he exclaimed in a loud voice.

"A jealous, opinionated, self-seeking, and thankless man, who thinks of little save his own glory! By God, sir, the people should know him as he is; then they might better appreciate my own motives! He has tried to humble me! He has even publicly reprimanded me before his staff. He drove me to desperation."

He stopped for a moment. I was hardly astonished; but did the man think I was an idiot not to know that Washington's reprimand, given the year before, was ordered by Congress, and that it had been made as light as the great commander could make it? I stood without replying, and presently Arnold went on in an astonishing manner:

"I have been misunderstood and maligned, but my conscience is clear. My greatest wish has been for peace for my distracted country, and my act was the sincere outcome of that wish. Had I been successful—had West Point fallen, sir, the war would now be over, and England would be showing generosity to her prostrate colonies. They would have gained all they have been fighting for. But the plans miscarried at the last instant and—"

He stopped abruptly, and rising to his feet, limped back and forth across the room in genuine agitation. "I do not know why I speak to you in this way, sir," he said kindly, "unless it be that you are a countryman of mine and that you have impressed me favorably. I am not prone to be so open in speech, though I am self-sacrificing." He halted before me. "Sir," he said, "I even struggled in prayer before I undertook the thing that ruined me."

I stared at him. Curse him! I could have struck the hypocrite in the face. It was all I could do to contain myself as I realized that here and in my power was the man I had been sent to help capture. But I masked my feelings. He suddenly changed his tense manner to one of more ease.

"Lieutenant Melton, what I have said must remain in your bosom. I forgot myself. Now, sir, have you reported?"

"Only to General Simcoe and yourself, sir."

"I understand. It is unfortunate that Colonel Durand and the Seventeenth are gone to join Cornwallis. Will you follow your regiment?"

"I intended to apply for a leave of absence, sir. I think I deserve it," I answered modestly.

"I agree with you and I myself will see that you get it," he returned with a cordiality I did not think he possessed; then he hesitated, and something like a feeble smile softened his saturnine countenance.

"Lieutenant Melton, I wish to tell you that you have been very remiss." My rising spirits fell. What was coming now? "In what manner, general?"

"In not reporting to your betrothed—for I know you have not seen her."

It was not a formidable accusation, but as it was one for which I had not been looking, I could not make no reply. And he evidently expected none, for he repeated himself and went on, speaking smoothly: "You were probably told that I had a surprise for you if you came within an hour. Lieutenant, you will be pleased to know that Miss Barrow is in the house and visiting my wife at this moment. I will send for her and give her a shock. I happen to be aware that she is not expecting your return for some time."

"Agnes?" was my involuntary exclamation as the room began suddenly to whirl.

"Agnes. Who else?"

As he spoke he reached forward and struck the bell standing on the table. At once the orderly entered.

"You will go to my wife's apartment, present my compliments to Miss Barrow, and ask her to step to the library at once." The orderly went out. "You see, sir," continued Arnold, "that I still have it in my power to give pleasure, and nothing causes me greater satisfaction."

God and Arnold only knew what answer I made, if I made any.

My prospects, fair enough the moment before, were blacker than they had yet been. I thought I had been up to my neck in danger before I appeared in No. 3 Broadway, but now I was immersed to the eyes. I know not what Arnold might have said to me at that time, but I believe I stood still, just as stands a prisoner before the firing-squad.

My whirling brain saw but one end to this. Miss Barrow would enter, take a single look at me and denounce me as an imposter. Then would come exposure, and I could easily imagine Arnold's wrath. God! I died twenty times in as many seconds, and those seconds seemed as many hours. I had become fairly numb in body and brain when I saw the door opened by the orderly who formally announced:

"Miss Agnes Barrow."

Even in my state I did not fail to mark the beauty of the woman who was to condemn me to death, but I could not then have described a single point about her save that she was dressed for the street; that a mask dangled from her wrist, and that as she swept into the room she halted, dropped a graceful courtesy, and then stood still, her eyes playing between me and general Arnold. She was plainly embarrassed in finding herself in the presence of a stranger.

"You—you sent for me, sir," she said, in a low, sweet voice, turning to Arnold.

"Miss Barrow," said the traitor, awkwardly getting to his feet, "were the light better you would have no need of asking why. Allow me to present your betrothed." He smiled grimly at the situation, undoubtedly thinking that the strange look which came into the girl's blue eyes was caused by happy surprise.

And for an instant genuine surprise it undoubtedly was which stiffened her and made her appear as if she did not credit her senses. I marked her round cheeks turn pale as seemed to hang a moment in the wind, then to my utter astonishment she extended both her lace-mitted hands and glided toward me.

"Lysander," she almost whispered, "I am glad you are back in safety. Why have you not been to see me? You—you may salute my forehead, sir." She bent her head toward me and I touched her forehead with my lips, feeling that I had taken leave of my senses.

"Now, upon my life!" exclaimed Arnold, with something like a light laugh. "This were but a cold welcome, Mistress Agnes! Faith, I fear that I am an iceberg that cools the air, and the blind god must not be chilly! I will be lenient and take my leave of you both. Lieutenant, I would be pleased to see you if you will call again." And the polished villain—for he was polished, and showed it on occasion—bowed himself from the room, leaving the girl and me looking at each other.

She was the first to speak. "What have I done!" she exclaimed, drawing away. "I am not sure but I am a born fool to allow a stranger's lips to profane my forehead! You have probably something to say to me."

"Madam, I have much to say that must remain unsaid," I returned, looking toward the window with a vague hope of yet escaping from it.

"And much that you had better say at once," she continued with spirit. "Under what rule of impertinence do you pose as my betrothed, sir?"

"I have not so posed, madam?"

"No," she returned. "Then what—why—"

"I posed only as Lieutenant Melton."

"But why—why?" she demanded in an undertone, stamping her foot impatiently.

"To save my life, madam," I answered recklessly.

"Ah! Then it was a God-given instinct that moved me!" she said in a tense voice. "Sir, who are you, and what have you done with Lysander? Tell me, and do not deviate from the truth. Do you suppose I risked myself through whim?"

"Madam," I said, with a sudden, wild hope in my heart, "you have snatched me from the mouth of hell. I will answer any questions you put to me."

"Truthfully?"

"I swear it, madam."

"Sir," she said, fixing her blue eyes on mine, "you are a spy—a rebel spy." I bowed. "Madam, I am at your mercy."

"Tell me quickly what happened. Sir here." She sank to an embroidered sofa; I placed myself at her side, determined to obey this woman in all she might demand. It seemed my only hope; and yet I was in mortal terror

lest she should run to the door and scream. I told her briefly what I knew of Melton's doings, and ended by accusing him of the death of M. Ledare.

"What!" gasped the girl, catching me by the arm, her eyes wide with sudden horror. "Armand Ledare? Did he murder my old master?"

It was my turn to be surprised, but I was not. I swear that so many things had happened to me that day as to have calloused me. I simply failed to comprehend what she meant. "Your master!" I exclaimed.

"He was. I took fencing lessons of him while in Paris. Let that pass, sir, I have listened to your confession—a damning confession, and fatal to you should I open my lips. But I do not know you yet. What is your name?"

"Daniel Dressler, madam. My home was here, and—"

I stopped as I marked the expression on her face. Her eyes became like suns; her lips fell apart, and she stared at me as if I were a ghost.

"Daniel Dressler, son of Jacob Dressler, of Cherry Hill?" she asked faintly, leaning forward.

"Aye, madam."

"Now, God has guided me!" she broke out. "Know you not who it was that shot at you? Know you not that Lysander Melton is your cousin—or your step-cousin?"

I started to my feet. She was on her own in an instant and laid her hand over my mouth. "Do not forget where you are!" she exclaimed. "Did you not know?"

"No, nor even dreamed—"

"Oh, wonder of wonders! Listen. Your aunt, Abigail Stern, was married to a widower, Darius Melton, ten years ago in Savannah. He lived only a month. Your aunt came to New York and went to your father's house, and Lysander, her stepson, came with her."

I was half stunned by the news. "And does she still live there?" I asked.

"Yes—yes. And I am living with her, for the present—"

"And betrothed to that hound? Madam, as certain as that my life is in your hands I fall to comprehend why you have so far saved it."

"Hush!" she interrupted. "Here is no place for explanation. You must get from this place at once—you must lose yourself—and I know of but one place where you can go and be safe—or comparatively safe."

"And that?"

"To your aunt's house—not as a nephew," she quickly added. "She will be glad to receive a lodger—an acquaintance of mine who has just come to the city. Her funds are low and—I have a horrid story to tell you later. There you can stay unless Lysander returns—"

"Which he never will," I brutally interrupted. "He will be caught and hanged."

She did not flinch at the prophecy, but went on: "The carriage is waiting. Follow me out and get in. Laugh, if you can. If you are capable of acting, do it now. I may save you yet. Oh, my soul! Was there ever such another day?"

"Madam," said I, feeling a new spirit arising within me, "I trust you fully. Am I to think that my cause can possibly be yours?"

"Sir," she returned, straightening her figure and speaking very low, "I am as good a patriot as you. When you posed as Lysander Melton, could I help knowing that you were in a desperate state? I am no fool. But few know my convictions. To the world I am a Royalist, and so must you be—a rabid Tory—to match your aunt. Come, sir, we must do our talking elsewhere. Escort me."

She held out the tips of her fingers, lifting them high; and I, hardly yet realizing the narrowness of my escape, took them and danced attendance in the exaggerated and affected manner of the macaroni of those days, forcing a smile (which must have appeared idiotic) as I led her down the broad hall and from the house, Arnold's orderly preceding us, and the sentries at the door saluting as if she were a marchioness.

"Cherry Hill, Peter," she said faintly to the liveried coachman who sat on the heavily embroidered hamper. Then she sank back in the seat of the chariot and lifted her mask to her face, either to keep the sun from marring her perfect complexion, or to hide all signs of agitation. She looked to me as if she were about to faint.

## CHAPTER IX.

### On Cherry Hill.

As we rolled up the Broadway and along the devastated district south of St. Paul's Church (where the great fire had been stopped) I felt safer than at any time since I had taken horse and fled from Baskingridge. I confess to having been something of a nervous wreck for the moment, but even then not so shattered but that I could think. And it occurred to me that the elegant turnout in which I sat could not have come from Cherry Hill. I bent toward the masked and silent woman at my side.

"Madam," said I, "if this equipage belongs to my respected aunt, is it not a little inconsistent with your statement that her funds are low?"

"She answered" cautiously. "This belongs to Governor Robinson, or rather to his ward, my intimate friend, Marion Romayne. She is at the governor's country-seat in Bloomingdale, and in her absence it is loaned to me. Do not question me further. What name will you go under to your aunt?"

"Benson," said I, the name coming offhand. "Mr. John Benson, a lawyer from up the river."

"A lawyer," she said, "had better acknowledge a slight acquaintance with

ner sob."

"By Heaven! I have more than a slight—"

"Hush! Have you money?"

"Sufficient for the time."

"Then offer to pay her in advance for your keep. It will win her. And be careful not show surprise or levity at her appearance. She is sensitive."

I must see you alone as early as possible. Chance to be in the cherry orchard soon after sunset. Be cautious. If your aunt should become suspicious even I could not save you."

She spoke so low that I could scarcely hear her. I looked at the broad back of the high-perched coachman and knew that no word could have reached his ear.

I do not know what route he took, but finally we drew up in front of my own house on Cherry street, and any man in the land might better than myself have claimed it as his. The surroundings were all unchanged, but the spacious mansion and its grounds were fast assuming the aspect of shabby gentility. The paint had flaked in patches from the tall pillars in front of the building; the garden in which I had played as a boy was well nigh an unshorn wilderness of tangled shrubbery; the paths were moss-grown, the driveway gutted by rains, and the great iron gates sagged on rusty hinges.

A flood of memory assailed me, and nearly overcame me, as I marked the degenerate condition of the place in which I had been born; but it was no time for vaporings and sentimentalities, and descending from the chariot, I took the girl by her finger-tips and pranced up the uneven brick walk, stepping like a popinjay, but in a mighty serious mood. I knew that the figure in black who stood in the doorway and watched our approach was my aunt.

And it was well I had been cautioned against showing any recognition of her peculiarities, else otherwise I would have been rejected as a lodger. For my Aunt Abigail was a striking figure in herself, and she was made more so by her dress and mannerisms. She was a very tower of a woman, being fully as tall as I, and of a masculine cast of countenance; and this cast was the more pronounced because of a man's full-buttoned, black wig she wore, though its incongruous aspect was somewhat softened by the widow's cap crookedly set on it.

She was severely clad in absolutely plain black silk, giving her the appearance of a domino unmasked, and its sombre effect was only relieved a trifle by a magnificent lace collar. It was of exquisite design and quality, but entirely out of place on her; it might better have graced a pump. Dressed in a uniform, my aunt would have made the figure of a soldier, she having the womanly outlines, and her voice was as strident as a grenadier's.

As for the rest, she wore mittens, thick spectacles rested on her bony nose, and under her arm she carried a long, ear-trumpet as a gentleman might carry a cane. For my aunt was very deaf.

(To be Continued.)

For that tired feeling take a street car.

Conscience is the watchdog which barks at sin.

Poker keeps more men awake nights than brain fag.

## WOOD COUNTY COURT HOUSE NOTES

### REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

Jennie A. Roerts to Jacob K. Roberts, 18 acres, sec. 23, Weston—*twp.*, \$26.00.

Edison E. Wade to Wm. and Emma J. Shimer, 40 acres, sec. 23, Weston *twp.*, \$5000.

Zorah M. Starr to Margaret E. Brown, lot 273, North Baltimore, \$1.

Jean M. Sloan to Harold and Laura Kinsley, lot 1318, North Baltimore, \$1.00.

Geo. Claty to Lina Spels, lot 131, Milton Center, \$125.

Maud M. and David Y. Prele to F. D. and Adelia Stoner, lot 1318, North Baltimore, \$300.

Charles F. Withrow to Charles J. and Ida M. Hosler, lot 136, North Baltimore, \$1200.

Grover A. Hill to John E. and Izora Wymer, lot 1592, North Baltimore, \$400.

J. C. Smith to Grover A. and Helen J. Hill, lots 1487 and 1488, North Baltimore, \$900.

U. S. to Chester B. Chappell, lot 343, Perryburg, *Pat. deed.*

William Nelderhouse to Frederick A. and Emma B. Mandell, lots 349, 372 and 373, Perryburg, \$1.

Board of Education, Perryburg to Walter W. Hoskin, 100 square rods, River Tract 62, \$1050.

Charles W. Franklin to Irvin and Florence Sutton, lot 138, Tontogany, \$800.

The open season for hunting squirrel closed Saturday, October 20th.

### MARRIAGE LICENSES

John L. Bland, 28, farmer, North Baltimore, and Miss Ruby Brandeberry, 20, North Baltimore.

Rial R. Williams, 34, clerk, Detroit, Mich., and Miss Ruth R. Knauss, 30, teacher, Bowling Green.

Jasper C. Franks, 20, farmer, Van Buren, and Miss Mabel Mae Alexander, 16, North Baltimore.

Carl E. Wells, 21, farmer, and Miss Gladys B. Shesler, both of Rising Sun.

Frank S. Kurfis, 43, farmer, and Miss Anna A. Keller, 24, oth of Steub

## FATE

Hereafter," announced the queen at the hotel switchboard, calmly, "I'm going to take life exactly as it comes. Nevermore will I be heard kickin' against things that are, or hopon' for things that ain't. It don't do a speck of good anyway," she continued. "All this worryin' and stewin' over our problems makes most of us old before our time. Life's plums and lemons was all picked and packed and labeled before we was born, and they'll be handed out to us when the time comes without us makin' no effort whatsoever. So after this I'm simply going to make the best of things and save my energy for something more important than fussin' over what can't be helped.

"Well, for pity's sake!" exclaimed her friend at the cigar stand. "What crazy book have you been readin' now, Myrtle?"

"None," replied the switchboard queen, coldly. "I'm capable of formin' my own conclusions, and I don't need no horn-rimmed specks to aid my eyes in seein' what's goin' on all around me."

"Positively, Clarice, since I got this side light on how the world is run, I get a real heartache when I think of the poor sumps that's hurryin' and frettin' their lives away, and all for nothin'."

"Look at that man there, for instance," she pointed. "Ain't it a scream the way he's always on the jump, an' hardly sets down long enough to read a paper? Just as if his rushin' gets him anywhere!"

"That's J. P. Baxter, and they say he's worth two millions that he made himself," demurred Clarice.

But Myrtle waved this lightly aside. "If he was intended to have \$2,000,000, he'd got 'em just the same whether he rushed around like he dies, or just set on a chair quiet and waited for 'em to come to him. People can't get away from what's intended—J. P. Baxter or you or me, or anybody else."

"Haven't you never noticed," she went on, "how these little, thin, scared lookin' men are always married to big, strappin' women that domineer over 'em somethin' awful? It ain't because they like women like that—nothin' of the kind! They'd prefer a girl that was still littler and scarier than them, so they'd look like heroes alongside their wives. But it's intended for 'em to marry big, bold Amazons, so they do."

"An' whenever you see a fine, handsome, noble-lookin' fella, ain't he invariably tied down to a little, insignificant, pug-nosed wife that ain't got sense enough to pick out her own spring suit without draggin' all her friends to help her do it? He certainly is, because many's the time when I was heart-free, Clarice, I've let my young fancies roam toward such a man only to find out that he'd already made the mistake of his life with a girl like I've just described."

"And don't you know loads of fat folks who diet an' exercise somethin' painful, and stay just as fat? An' others that eat starchy things and lay around the house thinkin' pleasant thoughts, just like the newspaper recipes say, an' keep right on gettin' thinner? Well, now don't all them instances go to prove that things is intended and you'll get what's comin' to you whether you like or not?"

"I s'pose you're right," murmured Clarice. "Say, Myrtle, Al West's goin' to take Mabelle Green to the club dance Wednesday—did you know?"

Myrtle straightened up with a jerk. "Yes he is—not!" she snapped.

"I thought you'd feel that way about it, dearie," sympathized her friend. "But it's so. Mabelle told me Al said he'd take her, providin' some important business didn't prevent."

"Well, important business'll prevent, stated the switchboard queen, emphatically. "Al West asked me first, an' I said I wasn't goin'—but I'm goin' now, all right!"

"Sell," argued Clarice, "what's the use puttin' yourself out so if you really don't want to go? If Al West is intended to take Mabelle instead of you or vice versa, why, nothin' can change it. Things is as they are intended in this life."

"Humph!" replied Myrtle with fine disregard for former utterances. "Believe me, dearie, anything you get in this world you work for!"

### TO PRESERVE STRAWBERRIES

Specialists in commercial handling and preserving of fruits in the Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, have worked out the following accurate directions (which may be applied also to household conditions) for preserving strawberries so that just enough sirup of the proper consistency can be made in advance. With this amount of sirup the berries can be packed attractively without floating and no sirup will be left over, which in many cases means an important saving in sugar.

Sterilize jars.—While the berries and sirup are cooking, place the empty clean jars and caps in tepid water and bring to a boil, and allow to boil for at least 15 minutes. Remove the jars from the water only as they are to be filled and the caps only when they are to be placed on the jars. Simply drain jars and caps; do not wipe them. One of the inexpensive jar lifters will be convenient in handling the hot jars.

Sterilizing rubber rings.—Do not boil rubber rings for any length of time. Just before placing them on the jars dip the rings for a moment into a quart of boiling water, into which 1 teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda has been added.

Strawberry Preserves.— Recipe No. 1.—Sirup.—Add 35 ounces of sugar to ½ pint of water, bring to a ball and skim.

Preserving.— To this amount of sirup add exactly 2½ pounds of washed, capped and stemmed strawberries. Boil the fruit until it registers 222 degrees F. on a candy or chemical thermometer. If no thermometer is available, boil until the sirup is very heavy—about as thick as molasses. Remove scum from the preserves.

Packing.— Fill the sterilized jars full of hot berries. Pour in enough of the hot sirup to fill the jar, leaving as little air space as possible. Put sterilized rings and caps on at once,— but do not fasten tightly.

Sterilizing packed fruit.— Stand the sealed jars in tepid water up to their necks if possible. Bring this water to a boil. Let pint jars stay in the boiling water for at least 15 minutes and quart jars at least 25 minutes,— then close caps tightly at once. At the conclusion of the operation, stand each jar for a moment on its cap to make sure that the seal is absolutely tight.

Strawberry Preserves.— Recipe No. 2.—The following method is preferred by some because it leaves more of the natural color in the preserves.

To 2 pounds of washed, capped and stemmed strawberries add 26 ounces sugar, let stand over night. In the morning pour juice thus obtained into a preserving kettle, add berries and cook to 222 degrees F. or until the sirup is very heavy. Pack and sterilize as in recipe No. 1.

The preserving specialists advise those who are going to put up any quantity of preserves to purchase a chemical thermometer which gives readings by degrees Fahrenheit for each degree from 212 degrees up. Equipped with such a thermometer, the preserver can be certain of uniform results. The sirup will not reach 222 degrees F. until it is cooked enough and is of the best preserving consistency. The reason for this is that the sirup will not reach this temperature until the proper amount of water has been driven off by boiling. Such a thermometer is also very useful in all forms of preserving, in candy making, and in other cooking operations where results depend upon exact heating.

The following tested recipe for preserved strawberries is used in the boys' and girls' club work in the Northern and Western States: Make a sirup of 1 quart of water and 11 pounds of sugar and cook in an open kettle until a candy thermometer registers 265 degrees when placed in the sirup. Add 8 pounds of berries to the sirup. Cook very slowly, just at the boiling point. Stop the cooking when the thermometer registers 219 degrees and pour into the shallow pans to cool. Hasten cooling by pouring sirup over berries. Skim while cooling. Fill into jars when cold and allow to stand unsealed for 4 days. Put rubber and cap in position, not tight. (Cap and tip, if using enameled tin cans.) If using a hot-water bath outfit, sterilize 30 minutes; if using a water-seal outfit, or a 5-pound steam-pressure outfit, or a pressure-cooker outfit, sterilize 15 minutes. Remove jars. Tighten covers. Invert to cool and test the joint. Wrap jars with paper to prevent bleaching and store.

### FEMALE TURTLE PROVES TRUE TO DEAD MATRONS.

In Her Grief She Lays 21 Eggs Beside the Dispatched Snapper.

GRISWOLD, Conn.—No faunal fablo is this tale of the devotion of a big snapping turtle to her mate, but it is vouched for by two good men and true, Frank Geer and Clifford Barr of the borough of Jewett City.

The two young men were riding along the road near Butt's ridge recently when they spied an enormous turtle blocking the way. In order to prevent the forty-pounder from slipping back into the swamp the young fellows held him by the tail till they could decide what to do.

As they had nothing in the shape of a weapon, it was planned that Barr should stand upon the turtle's back while Geer went to a farmhouse half a mile away to borrow an ax. These measures suited the young men but the turtle objected strenuously and set off toward the swamp. However, Barr was able to retain his footing on the shell until Geer returned, when a few blows of the ax ended the big fellow's career.

The young men were going on a business errand, so determined to leave the cadaver of the turtle in a grain sack beside the road until their return.

When they came back a few hours later they were amazed to see the turtle's mate gliding off, after having laid twenty-one big, white eggs in a hole which she had dug beside the sack containing her consort's "remains."

It was evident by her actions that she realized in some instinctive way that something was wrong. She managed to escape, but Geer and Barr have the twenty-one eggs and the defunct Papa Turtle.

## Grasser Motor Co.

Cor. Madison & 16th Sts. Toledo, Ohio

OUR LIST OF USED CARS

Consists of

Studebakers, Overlands, Willys-Knights, Fords, Suxons, Cadillacs and Fords with Truck attachments.

Terms if you like