

BUSINESS CARDS

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THE DOOM OF THE TORY'S GUARD.

BY NEWTON M. CURTIS. CHAPTER VII.

Mervale and Jacob Dash were early astir on the morning of their contemplated excursion to Schoharie. Jacob had prepared their morning meal, before he roused his comrades, and had likewise bestowed a goodly quantity of provender in the skiff, to serve them on an occasional luncheon on their way. After the breakfast was concluded, he called the two rangers who had remained behind to assist him in the care of Mervale, before him, in order, as he said, "to lay plans aright."

Without father aid, the ranger, holding his rifle in one hand and his provisions in the other, dashed into the stream followed by Mervale. The water was but about three feet deep, and some twenty or thirty broad, and they soon reached the opposite shore in safety, and then concealed themselves beneath the heap of brush. They soon heard the trampling of many men in the woods, and in a few minutes some thirty or forty whites, and nearly as many Mohawks, came into view a few rods to the east of where the skiff was lying. Here they all halted, seeming to entertain a similar opinion with Jacob, as regard to eating for they immediately seated themselves upon the ground and began to overhaul their stores, as if to supply the wants of nature.

And were once more afloat in the skiff, Jacob merely saying that it was fortunate that they had taken Van Loan's skiff, instead of the one he had obtained from Johnson's men. "Case," said he, "if they hadn't known this skiff, we might have a skrimmage!" Jacob directed his skiff to the north-east shore, and then vigorously plied his oars. They were not long in arriving at the confluence of the Schoharie creek and Mohawk, when they carefully secreted the boat and pushed forward to the settlement on foot. They were joyously received by the inhabitants, yet they found them in the greatest state of alarm, and in momentary expectation of an attack from the Indians and Tories. The women and children were placed within the fort, the cattle were driven up into the yards, sentries were posted in the forest around them in different directions, and every thing that could contribute to a vigorous and determined defence was placed in some convenient situation.

Jacob and Mervale detailed their meeting with the militiamen and Mohawks in the wood, and the fact of their continuing their march in an easterly direction seemed to confirm the fears and suspicions of the inhabitants of Schoharie. Soon after sundown all sought refuge in the fort, which, although not built in any scientific form, was sufficiently large and secure against the attack of any troop destitute of artillery. Jacob found his men anxious for his arrival, and impatient to be led against the foe. Fatigue had been unwearied in his attention to their discipline and practice in the few tactics then in vogue amongst the militia of the land, and they had paid him, in a visible improvement for the labor bestowed.

the neighborhood of their leader. Feeling secure, however, in the consciousness of superior numbers, he returned to his comrades, determined to push on and secure his prey at all hazards. The Tories cautiously approached, headed by Van Loan, who was armed with an axe. They arrived in front of the cabin undisturbed, and then completely encircled it, in order to prevent the possibility of an escape. A few heavy blows from Van Loan's axe demolished the door, and he rushed in with his weapon uplifted, shouting at the top of his voice, "I command you to surrender, in the name of the king." He paused for an answer, but none came. "It is useless to think of escape," he continued, "for you are entirely surrounded, and your only hope for mercy lies in your immediate surrender!"