CAPTAIN TREMAIN'S WIFE.

A Thrilling Story of the Days of the American Revolution.

BY MARTHA J. LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

"Isn't that a boat, that speck upon the river near the other shore?"

The questioner, a pale, blue-eyed young man of perhaps 25, bore the marks of rough experiences. One eye was closed and one side of his face swollen and discolored. His clothing was in disorder and his left arm badly sprained. He was reclining on the damp earth at the mouth of a shallow cave on the shore of the Hudson, near what is now the western terminus of Christopher street. It was in the forenoon of a sultry day in the month of June, 1776.

In striking contrast to the limp figure of the bruised and battered Harry Shipton was the self-poised, faultlessly attired, gentlemanly looking man of some thirty or more years who stood before him. He was in citizen's dress, but of unmistakable military bearing, tall, well proportioned, with a shapely head, and features of unusual manly beauty. He looked toward the object indicated.

"Yes," he said, quietly, "that seems to be a boat, probably some fisherman's." Then, turning and taking the pitying eyes upon the disabled youth, he asked, "How did you get through the lines?"

"Horrocky. Such a hole as this to stay in, and my head and arm splitting with pain!"

It is bad. Perhaps you would rather I had let them drag you to the old jail—but that might not have been the worst of your trials."

"Oh, no; this is a palace to that. Don't think I am ungrateful, but I am in agony. What shall I do? Do you know whether those devils are still hunting for me?"

"I think they are, but not in this direction. Someone raised the cry that a Tory had placed you behind him on his horse and galloped off to the no th in the darkness, and a lot of troopers started on the run expecting to overtake you. Meanwhile you found a refuge here."

"I've found it for me. It is a mystery to me how you ever brought me here. I don't seem to remember."

"Let that pass now. How would you like a bit of breakfast?" From his pocket neanwhile the speaker exhumed a small paper parcel and placed it upon a lace-edged pocket handkerchief which he spread upon the ground before the wounded man, at tabled-th. It was a delicious sandwich. A little flask was drawn from another pocket and some wine poured into a tiny silver mug and placed beside it. Harry Shipton had fasted for nearly twenty-four hours, and having one free hand he helped himself like a starving man. He brightened at once and said:

"You are jolly good to me, and yet I do not even know your name."

"I am plain Dr. Harris for the present. I cannot tell you my real name, because these rocks may have ears, and these are war times."

"Is there any way for me to get off the island to-day, Doctor? Did you see my brother last night, as you promised?"

"Yes, I saw Charlie Shipton, if ne is your brother. I went immediately to him on leaving you here, told him of your misfortune and your injuries, and where you could be found, and urged him to provide means to help you across the Hudson to your family. He was unkind to me and abused you. He said you were a traitor to your country and deserved to be hanged, and that he neither could nor would do anything for you. Perhaps you know that he has enlisted in a rebel artillery company under the captainship of a young man by the name of Hamilton, to whom, by the way, I and to apply, in the guise of a doctor, for a permit to speak to your brother."

"Really, that is picturesque! Charlie under Alexander Hamilton, is he! Did Hamilton know of the nature of your errand to my brother?"

"Of course he did. I could accomplish nothing without telling him, and I was convinced he would not betray you. He expressed great sympathy for you, and sorrow that you were on the wrong side in the controversy; said you and he were chums in college and that he liked you immensely. He made it easy for me to confer with your brother without eavesdroppers, and you know the result."

"What could have turned Charlie into stone?" moaned Harry Shipton. "He has always been the dearest boy in the world until lately, so tender-hearted, so generous, so true. Hamilton was a clever lad, forever drilling the boys in military gymnastics in the college grounds and in debating on politics and war. I could beat him in recitation, though, every time. I was at the head—and now to think of my being a fugitive, hunted to the death in my own native New York, and my brother willing to let me die! He is a monster!"

"War always makes men into monsters."

"Look, Doctor, look! That boat is certainly heading for the shore, just below us here," and Harry Shipton pulled himself up for a better view.

There was no available landing place in the vicinity and the little craft was in obvious danger. Gusts of wind had been for some time stirring the broad Hudson into a tumult and the boat was dancing among the waves like a crazy thing as it neared the rough bank.

"By Jove, it will be dashed to pieces! It is a woman rowing! She cannot manage the oars," cried Harry.

There was no response, for the doctor had darted to the water's edge with the speed of a whirlwind; but before he was near enough to make his voice heard by the occupants of the boat two women and an infant, the woman who was rowing made a spring to clutch some overhanging bushes, and partially succeeding was dragged forward into the deep black water and disappeared. The boat rebounded from the shock, tottered a moment upon the crest of a high wave, and then went over—the woman and the infant in her arms uttering a piercing shriek as she was plunged into the river. The doctor had divested himself of his loose clothing as he ran, and swinging himself down by the branch of a tree he dropped into the waves and pres ntly emerged with a burden that taxed all his strength to lift up the ragged bluff to a place of safety. It was the mother with her infant clasped tightly to her breast in a death-like embrace. The baby was extricated, and after a little manipulation opened its laughing eyes and puckered its pretty mouth and coo-oo-ed. The doctor squeezed some of the water from its clothing, and picking up his coat from where he had thrown it wrapped it about the little innocent, which he laid tenderly into a nest among the bushes. Then he applied all his energies to the restoration of the mother, whose white, girlish face was very lovely in her unconsciousness. Great masses of brown hair, loosened from their fastenings, were so tangled about her neck and throat that he was obliged to cut some of it away with his pocket knife to prevent further choking. As she gradually revived he placed the flask with its few remaining drops of wine to her lips—then fanned her gently with his hat.

"My baby," she whispered without lifting her eyelids.

"Your baby is safe," was the reassuring response.

"Is she dead? Oh, heavens, it is my sister Edith!" exclaimed some one behind the doctor, and turning his head he looked into the horrified face of Harry Shipton, who had hobbled to the spot from the cave.

"No, Harry, not dead," came from the prostrate figure, whose beautiful dark eyes were wide open now and fixed upon her rescuer with wondering interest. She held out her hand and the Doctor raised her into a sitting posture—and it was necessary for him to support her thus for a few moments.

"I came for you, Harry. I hope the boat is not lost, for you are to go back in it," she said, and Doctor Harris observed that she had the low, trained voice of a gentlewoman—a voice with a thrill in it that sent the blood rushing through his veins.

"You came for me, Edith! How did you know I was here?" asked Harry.

"Charley told us; he came to us in the night—last night—he had special leave of absence from Captain Hamilton to inform us of your hurts, and papa and mamma were so distressed and uncertain how you could be reached and your life saved that I volunteered to undertake the secret service. Matilga rowed me across the river and is to row you back. Where is she?"

"I will look for her," said the doctor.

"She fell into the water, upsetting the boat, and I fear she is drowned."

"Oh, no, I think not. She can swim like a fish, and is quite equal to saving herself," said the lady, as calmly as she would have ordered a chicken for dinner.

The words had scarcely left her lips when a woolly head and a very black face appeared above a rock on the edge of the bank. Up came one black hand, then another, and, finally, the whole figure of a short, stout negro woman was in sight.

"Hallon, Missus! how's you got up dare? I'se been ranstacking all fro de riber for ye. Scho, Massa Harry, youse ready, be's ye? I'se jest done beat a tryin' to catch dat boat, and I'se got him. Come along wid ye."

Surprises had chased each other so swiftly that Harry was completely overcome. He saw how he had misjudged his brother Charlie, and now here was his proud and handsome sister risking her life in a venture few men would have undertaken to get him out of the trouble he had indiscreetly brought upon himself. Matilga came forward and surveyed him with a friendly grin.

"Massa Harry, wot you been a doin' to yer eye? Massa Charlie don't get no such bad looks. Be's you tryin' to beat dis nigger on de color question? Come along wid ye."

"What is your hurry? We cannot leave Edith here——"

"Yes, you can," interrupted the lady, "it is all arranged. Nobody wants to hang me; it is only yourself, Harry, that is in immediate danger. I am going to stay on this side for the present. I expect to pay a visit to General Washington and ask for a permit to join my husband."

"Come along wid ye, Massa Harry. I hear de guns dis berry minuth."

"I think, Shipton, you had better lose no time. I will look after your sister," said the Doctor, assisting the young man as best as he could toward the shore.

"Good-by, Missus. Ursula will fix you up skrim," cried Matilga, as she vanished beyond the bluff.

CHAPTER II.

Under the hot skies of that memorable month of June, 1776, New York was one of the most stirring places on the Western Continent. The erection of an independent empire on this side of the Atlantic Ocean was the all-absorbing topic o thought and speech. War and bloodshed was on the wing. Men were working day and night on the fortifications. For many weeks New York had been in a state of agonized alarm. Families were making their escape as best they could, taking little or much with them as the circumstances permitted. The rich knew not where to go for safety, and the poor, thrown upon the charity of interior towns, suffered from a complicat on of ills. Hundreds of men were suddenly deprived of the means of supporting their families. Inhabitants as well as soldiers were subject to strict military discipline.

Washington had reached New York on the 13th of the previous April, and was in almost hourly consultation with the principal men of the New York Congress, several of whom were appointed to military office. Troops were marching into the city from all points of the compass in variegated costumes that must have seemed grotesque to the English soldiery. The old red coats worn in the French wars had been brought from the garrets and brushed up for use by the Connecticut men. Thus every now and then was seen a dingy regimental of scarlet with a triangular and much tarnished lace hat among the tow frocked volunteers. Some of the Marylanders wore green hunti g shirts with legg as to watch. Troops from De aware came in dark blue coats with red facings. Some of the Jersey riflemen were in short red coats and striped trousers, others in short blue coats, old leather breeches, light blue stockings, shoes with brass buckles and woollen hats bound with yellow. The Pennsylvania regiments were in all the colors of the rainbow, brown coats faced with buff, blue coats faced with red, black coats faced with white and studded with great pewter buttons, buckskin breeches and blue cotton hats with tape bindings, also blue coats faced with white; while several companies came without any coats at all, each man with but a single shirt, and that so small that the New-Englanders made fun of them. The Virginians were in white smock frocks furbelowed with ruffles at the neck, elbows and wrists, black stocks, hair in cue, and round-topped, broad-rimmed black hats, although ere long their light dragoons were uniformed in blue coats faced with red, or brown coats faced with green. Washington's guards were blue coats faced with buff, red waistcoats, buckskin breeches, black felt hats bound with white tape and bayonet and body belts of white. Hunting shirts with breeches of the same cloth gaiter, fashion about the legs were seen on every side, and as these were convenient garments for a campaigning country, they were soon adopted by the British themselves. This was the origin of the modern trouser or pantaloon.

The question of what to do with the Tories was anxiously being discussed by the patriots, as they were making mischief on every hand. It was difficult to discriminate between those who were really criminal as covert enemies and such as indulged in a peaceful difference of opinion. Many were seized on suspicion and imprisoned by the Committee on Conspiracy. The popular element was fierce and uncompromising and compelled neighbors to show their colors. It was unsafe to breathe a syllable against the American cause. Neutrality was not tolerated. All who did not declare themselves for liberty were, in the lower class particularly, pronounced traitors and pursued with merciless rancor. They were chased like beasts and obliged to secret themselves in the woods, swamps and other hiding places and wait for the coming of the British army. Even in the best families fathers and mothers were doomed to see their children arrayed against each other, as in the case of Harry and Charlie Shipton. Wives saw their husbands arming against their own blood. Personal and domestic happiness was jeopardized on all sides.

The Shiptons lived in an elegant house in Broad street, and were greatly beloved by their associates. Colonel Shipton was a retired British officer, but his three children were born in New York. His only daughter, Edith, had, in 1774, married her cousin, Roland Tremain, a young man about her own age. When hostilities were dawning he had declared all his relatives and family interests and joined the patriots. Charles Shipton did likewise, despite his father's protest and prayers. Harry Shipton's sympathies were with his father and with British rulership, and he combated with his brother Charles on the subject until coming to boiling heats the father interfered and told each to go his own way. They left the family fireside one sad evening, by different doors, and before midnight Colonel Shipton was privately informed that he was himself under suspicion and to be arrested by the "Committee on Conspiracy" during the next forenoon. This was to him an unexpected blow, for he had no intention of taking part in the coming conflict. There seemed but one course, however, for him to pursue; he secured boats and in the darkness of the early morning he and his family were conveyed with a few necessaries to the Jersey shore of the Hudson, where they took possession of a farmhouse on their own property, some half a mile from the river. This was only a temporary refuge, and Edith, who went with them, intended to return to New York the first opportunity in order to be near her husband.

"I am at your service, what can I do for you?" The Doctor had clambered up the bank from having seen Harry safely embarked on his trip across the Hudson, to find his patient convalescing rapidly. He had crept to her baby and was amusing it by shaking bits of grass over its face.

"There is a little habitation in the woods to the north of us, not far, where some of our servants are staying. I will go there. May I know how seriously my brother Harry is injured?"

"He has no wounds so far as I am aware that endanger his life, but he has such as should have immediate care."

"Was it true what Charlie told us, that he just barely escaped being hung."

"You might have thought so if you had seen the irresponsible mob that had him in hand when I came upon the scene," said the Doctor, smiling. "May I go and bring some of your people to you?"

"Oh, dear, no; I will go to them. If I had baby on my shoulder I could run away even from a band of Indians," and she laughed merrily in trying to rise to her feet, unconsciously seizing both the Doctor's extended hands.

"You had better see if you can walk before you begin to run," he said, playfully.

"I am all right. Yes, I can walk," she replied.

"Well, then, I wonder if baby will oblige me with my coat?"

He picked up the little one, held it high in the air, and made it laugh outright, and, laying it on the ground again, put on his coat, and then took it in his arms quite naturally.

A little later on a graceful, hatless woman, whose clothing, very much soiled and wilted, clung to her limbs, was groping her way step by step through a swampy field, followed by a man carrying a baby.

Some negro women sunning themselves in front of a little hut among the trees saw what they at first thought an apparition, but presently recognized the wounded and came running to meet her.

"Wat de matter, missus?" they asked in chorus.

"We have been to the bottom of the river; Matilga upset the boat."

"Lord's sake! Glory be's to God you's got out. Ware's Matilga?"

"She has returned to mamma with the boat. Ursula, take the baby and relieve this kind gentleman who helped us out of the water."

The order was obeyed with noisy demonstrations in the way of hugs and kisses, the baby seeming well pleased with it all, and in the midst of the comotion the Doctor took Edith's hand, raised it to his lips, and walked rapidly away, having left the words, "God bless you!" in her ears for a perpetual memory.

"Dare now, guess I know dat chap! Say, m'sus, ware did you find him?"

"Fanning me, when I was so near to breathe. What do you know about him?"

"He ware at Mister Elliott's last year. He came along wid de Commodore, and he were de chap dat brung de gold claspet to Miss Agnes."

"Well, he has been good to us, and that counts for something. You must not speak of him to a soul, lest they carry him off to prison as an enemy. Are my trunks here?"

"Yes, m'sus. We covered 'em up wid leaves in de cellar."

"I must have some dry garments at once, and so must baby; dress me up nicely, Ursula, for I am going to call upon Gen. Washington."

Within an hour and a half the wet and snarled hair had been dried and combed and arranged artistically in the fashion of the day, and the sweet face of Edith Tremain framed in a picturesque gypsy hat, while a thin gown of some summer fabric in white and blue set off the shapely figure to great advantage. The baby smiled approval, but cried with consternation when the bewitching object went out of sight down the pathway.

Richmond Hill House, Washington's headquarters, stood upon an eminence to the southeast not far distant, about where Charlton now crosses Varick street. It was a country villa, a mile and a half from town, surrounded by fields of grass and grain, with a flower garden at one side inclosed by a hedge. The roses were in bloom, and Ursula, walking beside her mistress along the winding carriage drive to the entrance to the mansion, could not resist putting her hand through the fence and snatching one, which she fastened in Edith's hat, and then walked on demurely. Suddenly there was a clatter of hoofs and two horsemen galloped round the curve toward them, one of whom lifted his three-cornered hat as he passed, and Edith blushed under the admiring gaze of Captain Hamilton, who wheeled his horse to ask respectfully:

"Can I serve you in any way?

"No, thank you, further than to take good care of Charlie," and away he galloped.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Not to Be Resisted.

The craving for freedom is so strong among prisoners that they will even throw away their chances of pardon for the sake of its temporary gratification. The author of "The American Siberia," a book describing convict life in the South, says that one prisoner had served out a long sentence up to its last day. He had worked faithfully, and never violated a prison rule. All the officials had the utmost confidence in him. He was to be released the next day, and meantime was one of a squad of men working out of doors.

The captain of the camp had occasion to use a barrel left on the top of a neighboring hill, and said, jocosely, to this prisoner:

"Do you think you could come back if I sent over the hill for that barrel?"

He laughed at the idea.

"Why, of course, I could, captain," he replied. "I've had a hundred chances to escape, and, besides, I shall be a free man to-morrow."

"Go ahead," said the captain.

He started over the hill, and was presently seen returning. When the captain looked up again he was gone. And the result proved that he had run about a mile and then sat down to hammer off the irons. When he was captured he seemed half dazed, and could offer no explanation except that he "just couldn't help it."

Another prisoner knew himself better. He was to be released in a few days, and the captain said to him, in reference to some errand:

"Do you think it would be safe for me to send you over there?"

A singular expression overspread his face, and then, in one burst of candor, came its explanation.

"Captain," said he, "you'd better not send me. If I got that far away I couldn't come back if I wanted to."

Potato Legends.

When potatoes were first introduced into Russia by a Mr. Rowland (the exact date of the introduction of the tuber into that benighted country being a subject of controversy, but usually set down at 1791) the people would neither plant nor touch them. They declared them to be the devil's fruit, and that they were given to his satanic majesty on his complaint to God that he had no fruit. God told him to "search the earth for food." Whereupon the poor devil fell to digging in the earth and found potatoes growing therein.

A similar legend seems to have obtained credit among the staid Britishers in Berwickshire, England. In that shire the introduction of potatoes is popularly attributed to Sir Michael Scott, once known all over Britain as "The Wizard of the North." According to the story, Michael and the devil formed a copartnership and took the lease of a farm on the Mertown estates, called the "Whitehouse." Michael was to manage the farm; the devil the capital; the produce was to be divided in the following manner:

The first year Michael was to have all that grew above the ground and the devil all that grew beneath the surface. The second year shares were to be divided in just the opposite way. His satanic majesty, strange to say, was badly beaten by the wily Michael, for that personage, with true Scottish foresight, sowed all the land to wheat the first year and planted all in potatoes the second. So the poor devil got nothing but stubble and potato tops. How these absurd legends originated no one seems to know, but the fact remains that the peasants of both Russia and England even to this day frequently allude to potatoes as "Devil's Fruit."

"You are altogether too fresh," said the potato to the egg, "and I have my eyes on you." "Now, look here, Irish," said the egg, "I dare say you have a good heart, but remember that when we come to scramble for a living you're not in it with me."—Life.

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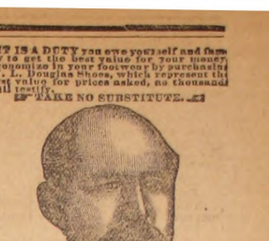

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