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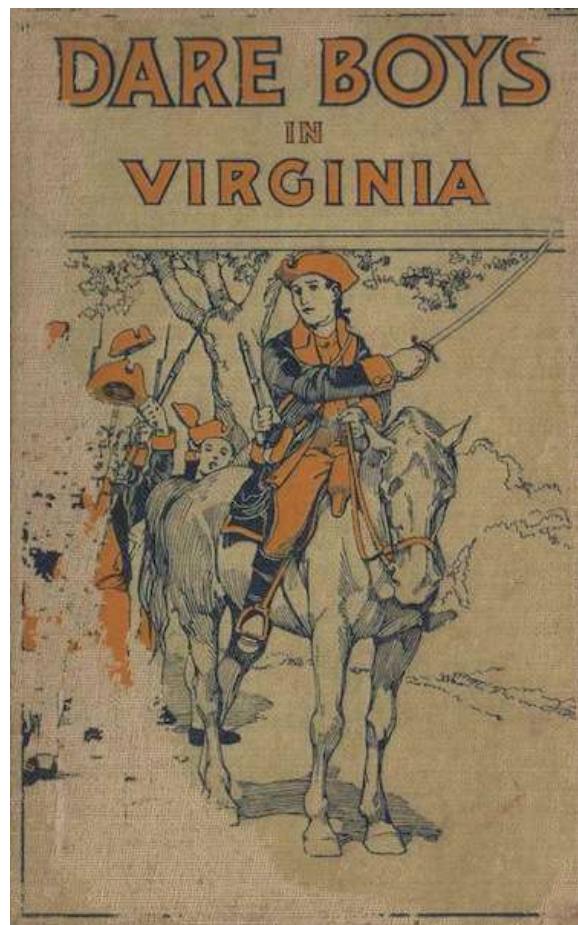
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Ben goes over the edge of the bank.

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## THE DARE BOYS IN VIRGINIA

BY

STEPHEN ANGUS COX

Illustrations by  
R. MENCL

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THE DARE BOYS  
By STEPHEN ANGUS COX

The author of the Dare Boys is specially equipped through long study and research to write upon the life and adventures of the revolutionary period. Every item of historical reference is absolutely correct. The trials and inherent bravery of the sturdy warriors of this epoch are always subjects worth while, but here the dash and bravery of the two Dare boys adds immeasurably to the interest.

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## THE DARE BOYS IN VIRGINIA

### CHAPTER I—In Virginia

"Well, here we are in Virginia," said Tom Dare. "It is fine, don't you fellows think? When we left New York, it was cold, with heavy snow on the ground, while here, instead of snow, there are patches of green grass and the weather is warm and nice."

"It certainly is lots more pleasant here than in New York at this time of the year," agreed Ben Foster.

"Yes, camp life is much more agreeable in a warm climate than in a region where there is snow and cold weather," acquiesced Dick Dare.

It was now the middle of the month of December of the year 1780, and the patriot regiment under the command of Colonel Morris had been sent down from the vicinity of New York, by General Washington, to try to hold in check the army of General Arnold, the traitor, who, having tried to deliver his country into the hands of the British, for gold, and failed, had been sent to Virginia, to have charge of the British campaign in that State.

One of the reasons for sending Arnold down there was to get him far enough away from General Washington, so that there would not be much danger of his being captured, an attempt to capture him while he was in New York having been made, but without success.

In Colonel Morris' regiment, and among the members of the company commanded by Captain Morgan, were three youths of about twenty years, who had done good work for the patriot cause during the years they had been in the patriot army. These youths were Dick and Tom Dare, brothers, and Ben Foster, a neighbor boy--the Dares and Fosters living close together, in New Jersey, a few miles east of Philadelphia--and now that they were here in Virginia, they looked forward to a lively campaign, for the warm, pleasant weather, so different from what they had left up North, would make it possible to move swiftly about the country.

The regiment had gone into camp on the bank of a little stream in the heavy woods, perhaps ten miles from the James River. Colonel Morris did not know the whereabouts of Arnold and his army, but liking this site for an encampment, he had decided to stay till he gained the necessary information.

When we introduce the Dare Boys and Ben Foster to the reader's notice, it is evening, and the soldiers are engaged in cooking their suppers beside the campfires. It was a lively, picturesque and interesting scene indeed, or would have so looked to anyone viewing such a scene for the first time. But to the soldiers, who had been campaigning four years, no thought of their appearance came to them. Their minds were on the then very essential matter of cooking their supper.

This important task finished finally, the soldiers ate heartily, and then, as was their wont, settled down to enjoy themselves. Those who smoked lighted their pipes, while others sat about in groups and talked of the coming campaign, in which they hoped to be able to make it hot for the traitor, Arnold, and his army of British soldiers and Tories.

Dick, Tom and Ben, and some of the other soldiers, among whom were Tim Murphy and Fritz Schmockenburg, sat in a little group and talked earnestly of their expected encounters with Arnold and his little army, and all were pleased with the outlook. They liked what they had seen of Virginia, and were glad they had come to the South, where suffering from the cold was not a necessary concomitant of camp life.

"I like id down here," said Fritz, nodding decidedly. "I hobe dot ve sday down here till der war is ended alretty."

"Sure an' thot would suit me, too," said Tim. "Oi'm t'inkin' thot Virginia is good enough for me."

"I wonder where Arnold's army is," said Tom.

"That is what everybody is wondering, I guess," said Ben.

"Yes," said Dick. "We know that Arnold is somewhere in this part of Virginia, but he may be a hundred miles from this spot."

"Well, when we find out where he is, we'll make it hot for him," said Tom.

"Yah, dot is vot ve vill do," said Fritz.

They continued to talk quite a while, and finally got out their blankets, lay down and were soon sound asleep. They slept splendidly till morning, and then cooked and ate their breakfast, after which for exercise they walked about for a while; of course within the bounds of the camp, after which they again sat down to talk.

While thus engaged, an orderly from Colonel Morris' tent appeared, and said to Dick Dare:

"You are wanted at the headquarters tent, Dick Dare."

"All right," the youth replied. "I'll go along with you." He got up and accompanied the orderly, and was soon standing in the tent, in the presence of Colonel Morris.

"Dick Dare," said the colonel, looking at the youth earnestly, "we are desirous of learning the whereabouts of Arnold's army, and so I have summoned you to tell you that I want you to go in search of Arnold's encampment."

Dick's face lighted up. This was just the kind of work he liked. He had done much of scouting and spying for General Washington, and he was always glad to be sent on work of this kind.

"I shall be glad to go and search for Arnold's encampment, sir," he said. "When shall I start?"

"As soon as you can get ready. I am eager to get Arnold located. Then I can begin my campaign against him."

"I will start at once, sir. Have you any instructions to give?"

"None, except to say, find Arnold."

"Very well, sir. If there is nothing else you wish to say, I will go."

"That is all, Dick. Find Arnold, and then report to me as quickly as possible."

"I will do my best, sir." Then Dick saluted and withdrew, and hastened back to the point where his comrades were. The moment they caught sight of his glowing face, they uttered exclamations.

"You are going in search of Arnold's army, I'll wager!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yah, dot is vot he is goin' to do," nodded Fritz.

"Av coorse," said Tim. "He's the bye thot can foind Arnold, av innywan can."

"Yes, I'm going in search of Arnold's army," said Dick.

"Say, I'm going with you," said Tom, decidedly.

"And so am I," said Ben.

"The three of us can spread out and cover a lot more ground than one person can," said Tom. "We're going with you, Dick."

Dick looked at them thoughtfully. "I guess you are right about that," he said, presently. "Yes, I'll take you two chaps along."

"Say, why not take Dootchy an' mesilf wid ye, Dick?" exclaimed Tim, who would have liked immensely to have gone with the three youths.

"That would be too many, Tim," was the reply. "No, just Tom, Ben and myself will go."

Dick went and reported to Captain Morgan, and was granted permission to take Tom and Ben with him, and a few minutes later the three left the encampment, followed by wishes for good luck from their comrades. They set out in the direction that they thought might lead toward the encampment of Arnold.

They walked at a moderate pace, and kept a sharp lookout around them, for they did not know but they might happen upon redcoats anywhere. And there might be parties of Tories in that part of the country.

They kept onward till noon, however, and had not seen any redcoats. They had seen only three houses in that time, and although they made inquiries at the houses, they did not learn of the presence anywhere in that part of the country of the British.

They ate a cold bite for luncheon, and then rested a while, and discussed the matter that had brought them into the wilderness, trying to figure out which direction was most likely to lead them to Arnold, and finally they got up and set out again.

They kept on going till about the middle of the afternoon, and then they came to the top of a ridge. It was covered with trees--in fact, they had been traveling through the timber pretty much ever since leaving camp--and here they paused, looking down the slope at the other side of the ridge.

At first, they saw nothing unusual, then suddenly an exclamation escaped the lips of Dick, and pointing his finger, he said in a low voice: "See yonder, boys."

Tom and Ben looked in the direction indicated, and Tom said, excitedly: "Sure as living, a party of redcoats!"

"Yes," said Dick. "Be careful, boys, and don't let them see you. Get slowly behind trees."

They took up their stations as suggested, and after a few minutes Dick said: "I'm going to slip down there, get within hearing distance of those fellows, if I can, and learn what they are doing here."

"Look out that they don't see and capture you, Dick," cautioned Tom.

"I'll be careful," was the reply. Then, telling the two to remain there, Dick set out on his perilous expedition.

He was careful to keep trees between himself and the redcoats, and as he was skilled at this kind of work, he managed to reach a point within hearing distance of the redcoats as they sat talking, then stationed behind a tree, Dick stood there, listening intently.

As it turned out, he was well repaid for the danger he had run in coming there, for he heard the British soldiers talking of how they were going to visit a settlement made up mostly of patriots, as soon as it was dark, plunder the homes of the settlers, and then burn the houses down.

It was a cold-blooded plan, and Dick shuddered as he listened, but at the same time he made up his mind to hasten to the settlement, warn the settlers, and thus enable them to either prepare to defend themselves, or take their leave before the redcoats put in an appearance.

Dick was on the point of slipping away, when he saw a couple of redcoats leave the group and come slowly toward the very tree behind which he was standing.

His blood suddenly seemed to congeal, for he realized that he was in great danger of discovery and capture.

## CHAPTER II—Roughly Handled

About the time that Dick was standing behind the tree, with the two redcoats approaching, in a little log cabin that was used as a school building, at a point about a mile from a Tory settlement consisting of about thirty families, sat a rather good-looking young man of perhaps twenty-four years of age. He was to play a rather important part in the life of Dick Dare and must now be introduced to the reader.

Herbert Miller was his name, and he was the teacher of the school. As the children had gone home, he was sitting at his desk, reading.

As has been stated, the schoolhouse stood about a mile from a Tory settlement, and about two miles from the schoolhouse, in the other direction, was a patriot settlement, consisting of about a dozen families. The schoolhouse had been placed where it stood, for the convenience of the children from both settlements, but was closer to the Tory settlement because there were more of the Tories than of the patriots. Of late, however, since the coming into that region of Arnold, with his army of British and Tory soldiers, the Tories of the settlement had grown rather arrogant. This, being taken up by their children, resulted in lots of trouble at the school, the Tory children abusing the patriot children in spite of the efforts of the teacher to prevent it, and at the time of which we write only a

few patriot children were attending the school. These few were the larger children, who could hold their own successfully against the arrogant and aggressive Tory children.

Herbert Miller was an intelligent young man, and he was at heart a sympathizer with the patriots, and hoped the American people would gain their independence, but of course he did not say much about this in the settlement, where he boarded. He was not a resident of this community, having come from a point more than a hundred miles distant.

Suddenly the sound of voices and the scraping of feet were heard by the teacher, and he rose and walked to the door. He was about to open it, but hesitated, and then placed his eye to a crack and looked through. He saw standing in front of the schoolhouse four men, and they were the worst and most rabid Tories in the settlement. Their leader was Hank Sprowl. He was practically a desperado, who made his living by hunting, and was not liked even by those who professed to be his friends.

Miller stood there gazing through the crack and wondering why the Tories were there. What did it mean? And why did they not enter, if they had business with him?

These questions he could not answer, and so after hesitating a few moments, he having first thought of opening the door and questioning the men, he turned and walked back to his desk, sat down and began reading. "If they have any business with me, they will come in and say so, presently." This he thought was likely.

Suddenly Miller's attention was attracted by a tapping on the window, and he glanced in that direction, and saw the face of Henry Philips, a boy of ten years, and a true friend of his. The boy was indeed a patriot at heart, and for that reason he was not liked by the other pupils at the school, and Miller had often interfered to keep bigger boys from abusing Henry, thus earning the boy's regards.

There was a look of excitement on the boy's face, and Miller, guessing that there was something in the wind, rose and went quietly to the window, and raising it, was about to speak, but the boy said, "Sh! Don't say anything, Mr. Miller. I've come to warn ye."

"What is the trouble?" the teacher asked in a whisper.

"The Tories are goin' to ketch ye when ye leave the schoolhouse an' give ye a coat uv tar an' feathers!" whispered the boy, glancing warily around him.

Miller started. "Why?" he asked.

"Cause ye're a patriot," was the reply. "Hank Sprowl an' two or three more Tories are aroun' at the front, now, waitin' fur ye to come out."

"I knew they were out there, Henry, but I didn't know, could not imagine, why they were there. So that is what they are up to, is it?"

"Yes, an' ye had better climb out of the winder an' make your escape."

Doubtless that was Miller's first inclination, but he thought a few moments, and then shook his head. "I don't think that I'll do that, Henry," he said. "No, I'll go out through the front door, as usual, and I don't believe they'll dare lay hands on me."

"Ye don' know Hank Sprowl ef ye think that," said the boy. "He's a bad one, he is."

"I don't doubt that, but I'm not going to climb out at the window and try to avoid them. I might as well meet them face to face, and I don't believe they'll bother me."

"They're cookin' the tar down here in the gully," said the boy, his face pale. "An' I seen Jim Simmons comin' with a bag of feathers as I left the gully."

"Oh, well, I'll not try to avoid them by slipping out of the window, Henry. If they are making their preparations, I might as well meet them and show them that I'm not afraid of them."

"They'll handle ye rough, Mister Miller," said the boy, his face pale. "They're mighty mean men, them fellers that Hank Sprowl has helpin' him."

"I know that, Henry. I'm much obliged for your kindness in coming to warn me. Now you had better go, before they see you, and handle you roughly also."

"I'll go. Well, good-by, Mister Miller. I hope they won't put no tar an' feathers onto ye."

"I hardly think they will, Henry. Good-by."

Then the boy dropped to the ground, and disappeared into the brush at the back of the schoolhouse.

Miller slowly and thoughtfully lowered the window, returned, took a seat at his desk, and sat there, gazing toward the door and evidently doing a lot of thinking. He glanced toward the window once or twice, and then resolutely rose and walked to the door, and opening it, stepped out of doors--to be confronted by Hank Sprowl and the three Tories.

"Good evening, gentlemen," greeted Miller, pleasantly. "Fine evening, is it not?"

The men exchanged glances, and it was evident that they were somewhat taken aback by the coolness and *sang froid* of their intended victim.

"Good evenin'," said Sprowl, gruffly. "Yas, et's a fine evenin'--a fine evenin' to put geese-feathers onto rebel birds like ye! Hey, fellers?"

The others nodded, and one said: "Ye're right, Hank."

"What do you mean?" asked Miller, pretending that he did not grasp Sprowl's meaning.

"I mean that we're goin' to give ye a coat of tar and feathers, ye blamed rebel!" snarled Sprowl. "That's what I mean."

Miller looked from one to another inquiringly, and then said: "Why should you want to do that?"

"I've jest told ye," replied Sprowl, harshly. "Because ye're a rebel, that's why."

"But I'm not a rebel."

"I know better. Ye air a rebel. We've heerd how ye talk in favor of the rebels, and how ye hev said as how ye hope ther rebels will win in ther war ag'in ther king. Ye kain't deny that ye hev talked in favor of ther rebels, an' so now we're goin' to give ye a coat of tar and feathers an' twenty-four hours to git out of this part of the country. We don't want no rebel a teachin' our children rebel sentiments."

"I am sorry, my friends," said Miller, calmly, "but I shall not quit teaching here unless told to do so by the men that hired me--and neither of you had anything to do with that. I will now go on home. Good evening," and he walked quietly away.

This action on his part so amazed the ruffians that they stood there, staring after him, with mouths agape. But Hank Sprowl presently recovered from his amazement, and said to his companions sharply: "After him, boys! We mustn't let him git away. We'll give him that coat of tar and feathers, that's what we'll do. Come with me."

Then he hastened after Miller, and his three companions hurried to followed him. They soon caught up with the young man, and as he heard their footsteps, and half-turned, as if to speak to them, they leaped upon him and bore him struggling to the ground.

Miller was a rather strong and athletic young man, and he fought with all his strength. But four to one was too big odds, and he was soon overpowered. Then, with his hands tied together behind his back, they hustled Miller to a nearby gully, where a kettle was already suspended above a fire, and in the kettle itself was a lot of tar, bubbling at a great rate. Near at hand was a bag of feathers.

"Ther tar's cooked good enuff," said Sprowl. "Take it off and let it cool a little bit. We've got ther bird here, an' we'll soon put ther feathers onto him."

"Gentlemen, I protest against any such proceeding," said Miller, with dignity. "You have no right to do any such thing as that. I demand that you set me free and let me go my way."

"Ye kin demand, but that's all ther good et'll do ye," grinned Sprowl.

A couple of the ruffians took the kettle off the fire, and set it at one side to cool a few minutes. Then one or two of the others took off Miller's coat, vest and shirt, and Sprowl ordered them to get to work, which they did, one applying the tar to the teacher's body with a brush, while others sprinkled on the feathers.

The tar was still too hot for comfort, and Miller writhed and gave utterance to groans expressive of pain, in spite of his efforts to keep from doing so, but the ruffians merely laughed and kept on till they had finished. Then they gave Miller a shove, and told him to go.

"And see to it thet ye are gone from this neighborhood in twenty-four hours!" cried Sprowl. "Ef we ketch ye here, arter that, we'll give ye somethin' worse'n tar and feathers. Now git!"

And Miller, glad to escape from such heartless villains, staggered away through the forest, followed by jeering remarks and coarse laughter from the Tories.

### CHAPTER III—Lizzie Santon

Lizzie Santon, the daughter of John Santon, a patriot who lived about halfway between the Tory and the patriot settlements, was out searching for their cow, that had wandered away, and the girl, humming a song, made her way through the timber, looking about her keenly and searchingly.

It was now growing dusk, and the girl hastened her footsteps, for she was a mile from home and still had seen no signs of the sought for animal.

Suddenly she saw a form moving in the woods at a distance of perhaps one hundred yards, and she uttered an exclamation of satisfaction and hastened in that direction.

But when she was within perhaps twenty yards of the approaching object, she saw that it was a human being, but with the upper portion of the body covered with feathers.

"What can that mean?" the girl murmured, stopping and staring in wonder, amazement and horror. "Why, that is terrible! Who would dare treat a human being in that barbarous fashion?"

She stood there a few moments, and then noticing that the tarred and feathered man was walking in a zigzag fashion, as if unable to see, she advanced till close to the person, and then she said:

"Who are you? And who did this?"

It was the teacher, of course, and at the sound of the voice he came to a stop and exclaimed, joyously: "Thank goodness I have found somebody. I am Herbert Miller, and some Tories did this, because they believed me to be a patriot."

"What villains!" exclaimed the girl. "This is terrible, Mr. Miller."

"Yes, so it is. Is that you, Miss Santon? It sounds like your voice."

"Yes. Why, can't you see me?"

"No, they got a lot of the tar in my eyes, and they have swollen shut. I have just been wandering in the woods, feeling my way. Would it be asking too much for you to conduct me to the home of a patriot, where I can get rid of the tar and feathers?"

"Indeed, I shall be only too glad to help you, Mr. Miller. I will guide you to my home, and father will help you get rid of your coat of tar and feathers and will give you some of his clothes to put on. Give me your hand."

She took hold of Miller's hand, and they made their way through the timber at a moderate pace, the young man telling the story of the affair in detail as they went.

The girl was profuse in her denunciations of the ruffians who had perpetrated the outrage, and said that they ought to be punished. But as the majority of the people in that vicinity were Tories, it was not likely that the ruffians would be bothered.

When they arrived at Lizzie's home, Mr. Santon took Miller in hand, and after an hour or so of hard work, got much of the tar and feathers washed off. The young man had been bathing his eyes at the same time, and had gotten them so that he could open them part way and could see, so he now donned shirt, and coat, given him by the patriot settler, and felt much better.

"I'll be all right now," he said. "Thanks to you and Lizzie, Mr. Santon."

"That's all right. You're welcome, Mr. Miller. I've kind of expected something of this kind, for I knew you were in sympathy with the patriot Cause, and I have heard the Tories say that they didn't like the idea of having a rebel to teach their children. You kind of took the side of the patriot children, in their squabbles with the Tory children at school, you know, and the Tories didn't like that."

"Yes, that is true. Well, I suppose that there would be no use for me to go back to the settlement."

"I wouldn't risk it, if I were you. They might take it into their heads to kill you, next time."

"I think that a good many of the Tories would not approve of what Sprowl and his gang did, but they are in the minority, and I suppose the majority of the families will be glad they did it, and likely, as you say, the ruffians would do worse next time."

"I think it likely."

"I fear that I may get you into trouble, Mr. Santon, by staying here at your home," the young man said.

"I don't think so," slowly and thoughtfully. "And likely they don't know you are here."

"That is probable. I wandered quite a ways before I came up with your daughter. I don't suppose any of the ruffians followed."

"No, likely not. You're safe here, and I don't think they will bother me for having you here."

"I hope not. I think that perhaps it will be well for me to go over to the patriot settlement, tomorrow, however."

"We'll see about it, Mr. Miller."

Supper was ready, presently, and the teacher ate at the table with the family, and repeated his story for the benefit of the other members, there being several children besides Lizzie. Mr. and Mrs. Santon looked very sober and thoughtful, for they lived only about a mile and a half from the Tory settlement, and if the Tories got angry at them, they might make it very disagreeable for them.

After supper the teacher and the members of the Santon family sat in the big sitting-room and talked a while, and then the young man was conducted to an upstairs room by Mr. Santon, and he began making preparations to go to bed.

He had only begun, however, when he heard footsteps on the gravel walk in the yard, and then followed a loud knocking on the door. Following this came in the loud, hoarse voice of Hank Sprowl:

"Open ther door, John Santon, or we'll kick it down. We know thet ye're harborin' that rebel skule-teacher that we tarred and feathered this evenin', and ye've got ter give him up. Ef ye don't, et'll be the worse for ye. Open the door!"

With the remembrance still fresh in his mind of the treatment accorded him by the same gang that was now likely at the door, Herbert Miller may be excused for feeling somewhat horror-stricken when he heard the demands given utterance to by the leader of the Tory gang.

He remembered what Mr. Santon had said, and wondered if they had come to kill him, this time.

#### CHAPTER IV—Warning the Settlers

Slowly the two redcoats approached. Dick looked around him, for some place where he could conceal himself, but did not discover any. He was on the point of turning and taking refuge in flight when the soldiers suddenly stopped while yet perhaps ten or fifteen yards from him, and stood talking earnestly.

This gave Dick an opportunity, and he at once took advantage of it. He turned and behind the shelter of a fallen log dropped to his hands and knees. He began crawling away now as rapidly as he could and at the same time not make any noise that would be heard by the two redcoats.

Dick was an expert in woodcraft, and he felt that he would be able to get away without being seen,



if the redcoats stood there conversing for a sufficient length of time. With this hope in his mind he kept on crawling, and when he was perhaps fifty yards away, he rose cautiously to his feet, keeping a tree between himself and his enemies, and looked back to see what they were doing.

The two were just entering the edge of the forest, but were still engaged in conversation and did not have eyes for anything about them, so Dick fortunately was not in much danger of being seen.

He hastened back to where he had left Tom and Ben, and told them what he had heard. They were eager and excited, and said they were glad that Dick had succeeded in learning the plans of the party of British whom they had chanced upon.

"What are we going to do?" asked Tom. "Shall one of us go back to our encampment and bring a party of soldiers to attack the British?"

"It would be impossible to get a party of our soldiers here before midnight or even later," determined Dick. "It will be dark in a couple of hours, and then the redcoats will likely go the settlement to plunder and burn the houses."

"Yes, it must be twenty miles, at least, to our encampment," admitted Ben.

"Yes," continued Dick, "and so the only thing for us to do is to go to the settlement as quickly as possible, and warn the patriots."

"That will be the best plan," acquiesced Tom. "Let's start at once, boys."

"All right. We may lose a little time looking for the settlement, so we had better start now."

They set out, but made a detour and went around the encampment of the British soldiers, keeping at a distance, so as not to be seen. And when on the other side of the camp, they walked rapidly in the direction that they believed would take them to the patriot settlement.

They searched around more than an hour, and finally caught sight of the houses of the settlement, through a clearing. With exclamations of satisfaction, they hastened forward.

They were not long in reaching the settlement, and going to about the largest house, one of them knocked on the door. The door was opened by a man of middle age, who eyed the youths curiously.

"How are you, sir?" said Dick, while Tom and Ben nodded a greeting. "Is this a patriot settlement?"

The man started. "Why do you ask?" he queried.

"Because, if such is the case, we have some important information for you."

"What is the information?" The man looked eagerly at the youths.

"There is a party of British soldiers encamped a couple of miles from here, sir," said Dick. "We spied on them and overheard them talking, and it is their plan to come here soon after dark, plunder your houses and then set fire to them. We hastened here to tell you the news."

"And you did well, young men. I thank you, in the name of the people of the settlement. Who are you, and where are you from?"

"My name is Dick Dare, and this is my brother Tom, and this is a comrade, Ben Foster. We have just come down into this part of the country, from New York, with a regiment of patriot soldiers under General Morris. Our camp is about twenty miles from here."

"Ah, I am indeed glad to hear that there is a patriot force in this part of the country," said the man. "Since Arnold came here and took command of the British force in Virginia, we have been having a hard time of it. He seems to be extremely bitter, the soldiers and Tories are rough and insolent, and there has been a great deal of plundering and burning of houses recently."

"Well, seemingly that is what the redcoats we saw intend doing here, to-night."

"I will call the men of the settlement together, and we will decide what to do," announced the man. "I will have them come here to my house, and you young men may as well remain here. Just step inside and have seats."

"We will sit here on the steps," said Dick. "It is pleasant out of doors."

"Very well," and the man hastened away.

The youths sat down and waited, and in ten or fifteen minutes there were a dozen men gathered there in front of the house. After greeting the youths, they discussed the matter at issue, and finally decided that the only feasible course was to take some essential household goods and go to a swamp a mile and a half distant. There was a small island in the middle of the swamp, they said, that would furnish them an abiding-place for a while, until the redcoats went away, and as the path leading to the island in the swamp was a narrow and crooked one, they did not think the redcoats could follow it. At any rate they could not do so in the dark.

As soon as this decision had been settled upon, the women were notified, and at once all began work. Even the children helped, and soon all the household goods of much value that could be carried had been brought out, and were gotten into shape for carrying.

Dick, Tom and Ben, of course, had helped, and at Dick's suggestion some of the children had been stationed out in the forest two or three hundred yards, to keep watch and give warning in case the redcoats should be heard approaching.

The settlers had just finished the work of getting the household goods out of the houses, when the young sentinels came running up and said that they had heard voices, and had seen forms moving amid the trees.

"The redcoats are coming!" said Dick. "You must get away from here quickly. There is no time to lose."

"You're right," said Mr. Williams, the first man the youths had spoken to at the settlement.

"Gather up the goods and we will start for the swamp."

This was done, and men, women and children, loaded down with the household effects, staggered through the woods, following the lead of Mr. Williams.

They had gone perhaps a third of a mile when they heard yells from the direction of the settlement, and knew that the redcoats had reached there and found their intended victims missing.

"They will likely follow," said Dick. "We had better hurry."

"Yes, we will go as fast as possible," said Mr. Williams. "It is scarcely a mile to the swamp."

They hastened onward, and although they listened intently, trying to learn whether they were being followed, they did not hear any sound to indicate that such was the case.

Presently they came to a stop, Mr. Williams having called to them to do so, as the edge of the swamp had been reached. He had brought a torch along, and now at the shut of dark this he lighted. Taking the lead, he guided the party into the swamp, keeping on the narrow, winding path. Without the light it would have been impossible to follow the trail, and to have gotten off into the quagmire at the sides would have been to perhaps lose their lives, for it seemed to have no bottom, the settlers said, being like quicksand.

They had gone about a quarter of a mile, when they heard yells behind them. They realized that the redcoats had followed, and having seen the light, knew where the fugitives were.

"They will light a torch and try to follow us, likely," said Dick.

"Possibly," said Mr. Williams. "Well, if they do, we will have to fight them off, for the path, where it connects with the island is very tortuous and narrow. At places not more than two feet wide, and so only a few of them could get at us at a time."

Presently the fugitives reached the island, and they carried the household goods over to the farther side, where they were placed on the ground, while they sat down to rest. They had hurried and the women and children were tired indeed.

They had been sitting there only a few minutes, however, when suddenly Dick exclaimed "Look yonder! I see a light. The redcoats are coming!"

Sure enough, a light that flickered and bobbed this way and that, in among the trees, could be seen, and it was evident that the redcoats were following the path leading to the island.

## CHAPTER V—The Redcoats Foiled

"I wonder how large a body of redcoats there is, Dick?" Mr. Williams enquired after a few moments.

"There are about twenty of them, sir," replied Dick promptly.

"And there are fifteen of us, counting you three young men. I guess we will be able to stand them off."

"I should think so, sir."

"Yes. We will leave the women and children in this sheltered spot. We will go over to near the point where the path connects with the island, and will await the coming of the enemy."

This was done, and the settlers, rifles in hands, and Dick, Tom and Ben, who had each two pistols, were soon stationed at a vantage point near the end of the path.

Here they crouched, watching the light as it slowly approached, and presently they could make out the forms of the redcoats. They were strung out almost in single file, and were making their way very slowly, for the ground was new to them. But doubtless they had seen swamps before, and knew that it would be bad for them if they were to get off the path and into the quagmire on either side.

Closer and closer they came, and when they were within perhaps twenty yards of the point where the path joined the island, Mr. Williams called out loudly:

"Halt! Stop where you are!"

The man in the lead, carrying the torch, stopped instantly and the other redcoats followed suit. There was a brief period of silence, and then the man with the torch cried:

"So you're there, eh?"

"Yes, we're here," was the reply.

"Well, we're coming there to have a talk with you, and--"

"You will advance another step at your peril!" interrupted Mr. Williams.

"Eh?" in an amazed voice. "You don't mean that you will show fight!"

"We certainly will show fight," was the reply. "The best thing that you can do is to turn around and go back to the mainland."

"Oh, but we won't do that."

"You will be sorry if you don't."

"Bosh. What can a little party of you farmers do against a force of the king's soldiers?"

"We are almost as many as your force, we are all armed, and we know how to shoot."

"Humph. How many are there of you?"

"There are fifteen of us."

"Well, there are fifty in our party, so what show do you stand of fighting against us successfully?"

"I have information to the effect that there are only twenty in your party."

This seemed to surprise the redcoats, and there was silence for a few moments, and then the leader said: "Who informed you to that effect, if I may ask?"

"That is my affair."

"Well, your informant was mistaken. There are fifty of us, and if you try to show fight, we will kill the whole gang of you."

"You are only twenty, and we will fight you, and will easily drive you away, too, for the reason that the path is so narrow only a few of you can approach at a time. We can shoot you down as fast as you appear at the edge of the island."

Again there was a brief period of silence, and then the leader walked back a few paces and held a low conversation with a number of the soldiers. Then he turned and advanced to within about twenty-five yards of the edge of the island, and called out sternly:

"Will you surrender?"

"No," was the reply.

"You had better."

"No, you had better go back to the mainland and let us alone."

"We are coming onto the island, and if you fire upon us, it will go hard with you."

"We will certainly fire," was the determined reply.

"Very well. Your blood be upon your own heads, then."

Then the leader called to the soldiers, saying: "Follow me, men. And be ready to fire the instant I give the word."

Perhaps he thought that this command would have the effect of frightening the patriot settlers into not firing, but if so, he was mistaken, for when the first of the party of soldiers was almost to the island, Mr. Williams cried sternly:

"Halt and turn back. If you don't do so at once, we will fire."

The soldiers continued to advance, and seeing they did not intend to stop, the patriot settler gave the command:

"Fire!"

Instantly the sound of a volley from the dozen rifles and the three pistols sounded on the night air, and it was evident that two or three of the British were at least wounded, for cries of pain and rage went up. One was seen to have fallen, and another was being held up by a couple of his comrades.

"Fire at the rebels, men!" roared the leader of the redcoats, and the British soldiers fired a volley, the bullets rattling above the patriots' heads, but not doing any damage, as the members of the party had dropped flat on the ground.

Then Mr. Williams called out: "You can't hurt us, no matter how much you shoot, and we can pick you off quickly. If you will return to the mainland and go about your business, we will not fire upon you again, but if you refuse to go, we will open fire on you, and will kill and wound a number of you."

Evidently the leader of the party of redcoats realized that, owing to the narrowness of the path, and their inability to rush forward in a body, they could not get at the settlers to do them damage, and that it would be the part of wisdom to do as the settler said, for he called out:

"All right, we will return to the mainland. Don't fire."

"Very well," replied Mr. Williams.

Then the British soldiers slowly made their way back along the path, carrying one of their comrades, and one or two assisting another. When they were out of rifle-shot distance, the leader of the party paused and yelled loudly:

"We will set up a siege at the point where the path reaches the mainland, and you will not be able to come off the island, and as soon as your provisions are exhausted, you will have to surrender."

Then the redcoats continued their progress toward the mainland.

"If they set up a siege, it will be bad for us," said Mr. Williams, soberly. "We have only enough food to last say two or three days." Then they stationed a couple of their number at the end of the path, to give warning in case the redcoats should return during the night, and the others went back and rejoined the women and children and their situation was discussed with considerable seriousness.

"I don't like the situation," said Mr. Williams, and the others said the same.

## CHAPTER VI—Dick's Daring Plan

Presently the settlers lay down and as a result of their weariness, they were soon asleep. They felt safe, as there were men on guard at the point where the path reached the island, and knew the British could not reach the island without being seen.

Next morning the subject of what should be done was taken up, and the men discussed the matter thoroughly, but could not come to any decision. Dick Dare and his two comrades had not had much to say, as they considered themselves outsiders, but when the settlers had talked an hour or so and had not come to any decision, Dick, who had been doing considerable thinking, rose and walked along the shore of the island, peering up into the trees that extended away across the swamp. Then he came back, and said to Mr. Williams: "How far is it to the mainland, in that direction," pointing toward the north. The path by which they had come connected with the island on the east side.

"About a mile, I should judge," replied Mr. Williams. "Why?"

"I have a plan which I think may work," was the reply. "I notice that the trees in the swamp are rather close together, and the limbs intermingle. I believe that I can reach the shore by climbing from one treetop to another. What do you think?"

"It might be possible to do that," was the reply. "An active young fellow like you might do it. If you should happen to fall into the bog, however, it would likely be the last that would ever be heard of you, as it is like quicksand, and sucks its victims down out of sight."

"Well, I believe I will try it, anyhow. If I can reach the mainland, I can go to the encampment of our army and get some of the soldiers to come and drive the redcoats away, or, better still, capture them."

"That would be splendid, if you could accomplish it," said the settler.

"I think it worth trying," said Dick, confidently. "I am a good climber, and believe that I can make my way from one tree to another, and thus reach the shore."

"I'll bet that I could, too," said Tom, eagerly. "You stay here and let me go, Dick."

But Dick shook his head. "I am older and stronger than you, Tom," he said, "and as it will be a hard job working one's way to the mainland, I prefer to make the attempt. You and Ben will stay here."

"All right, just as you say."

"I'll start immediately," determined Dick.

"You had better take some food with you," suggested Mr. Williams. "You will find your task a hard one and you may have to go two or three miles in order to reach the shore, for you will have to work your way wherever the trees are thickest."

"True, sir," said Dick.

He tied up a package of food, and fastened it on his shoulder by a piece of leather string, and then, after talking to Tom and Ben a few moments, he said good-by to all the folks. Stepping to a tree that grew right at the edge of the island, climbed it, till high enough up so that the limbs were of good size and extending to those of another tree out in the swamp, and then he worked his way across into the other tree.

"Good for you," congratulated Mr. Williams.

"That's the way to do it, Dick," cried Tom.

"It is going to be slow work," replied Dick. "But I think I can reach the mainland by noon, anyway."

Then Dick managed to get across to another tree still farther away from the island, and here he paused a few moments, to get his breath.

He talked to the settlers on the island while resting, then again began work, and by a strenuous effort succeeded in getting to another tree. From this one he reached another. Here he paused and rested again a few moments, after which he started again, and got into another tree, but one that was no farther from the island, but from that one he could reach another tree that was farther away.

"It's work that takes muscle," said Dick, stopping to breathe a few moments. "But thank goodness I have plenty of muscle."

Then he began work again, and was soon in a tree that stood nearly fifty yards from the island.

Here he paused a few moments, and then set out again. When an hour had passed, he was at least a hundred yards from the island.

"Pretty tired?" called Mr. Williams.

"Oh, not so very," was the reply. "I'll get to the mainland, all right."

"I sincerely hope so," was the reply.

On went Dick, picking his way along the tree branches, and he gradually worked his way well out into the swamp. Presently he could not see the people on the island at all. And they, not being able to see him, and fearing that their voices might carry to the redcoats on the east shore, if they yelled too loudly, stopped calling to the youth who was working so hard to get to the mainland, in order to go and get the patriot soldiers and effect their rescue.

The work Dick was engaged in was strenuous to say the least. It was very trying to his muscles, but

he was strong and had good staying qualities, and he kept at it, pausing once in a while to breathe a few moments and rest his tired muscles.

Slowly he worked his way out, through the tops of the trees, his life in danger, for if he were to slip and fall, he would sink deep into the quagmire, likely, and the chances were that he would be pulled down by the quicksand and smothered to death in the bog.

Dick did not stop to think of this, however. His mind was on his work, and he kept on, gradually shortening the distance to the mainland.

When he had been thus employed perhaps three hours, however, he came to a point from which it seemed impossible to reach another treetop. He paused and stood on a limb and gazed about him, keenly and searchingly. Should he go back and try some other direction?

Finally he decided that by climbing out on a limb that extended upward and outward from the tree he was in, and bending the end down, he might succeed in springing across from that limb to one on the nearest tree.

He at once put this into effect, and climbing up the limb in question till he was near the end, he threw his weight in such a manner that the limb was bent down almost to the breaking point. Still he found himself to be fully three feet from the limb on the other next nearest tree.

Now just by the force from his arms, must he throw his body across that distance, and more, for he must needs grasp the other limb at a point where it was sizable enough to bear his weight. He would make the attempt, anyway, for if he could get across this open space, the trees were close together beyond, and he would not have much difficulty in continuing the trip to the mainland.

So he began swaying his body back and forth, like a pendulum, till he got it swinging at a lively rate, and then he suddenly hurled himself through the air, letting go of the limb at the same moment, and making an effort to grasp the limb on the other tree.

He did get hold of the limb, but at a point too near the end, and the limb, being too small, slipped through his fingers and down he shot, striking the quagmire with a thud, and sinking to his knees.

An exclamation of dismay escaped Dick's lips. He looked around him, for something to get hold of to stay his sinking into the bog, but there was nothing within reach that he could catch hold of. Not even a clump of bushes was near. He was in an open space perhaps thirty feet square, and there was no tree closer than twenty feet.

Dick then began trying to pull his legs out of the bog, but found he could not do so. The harder he worked, the faster he seemed to sink into the quagmire, and after a few moments of strenuous effort, in which he failed to loosen either limb, but in fact found each leg deeper in the bog, he desisted. His face perspiring profusely, he stood there panting for breath as a result of his strenuous exertions, and gazed about him, hoping to see some means by which he might extricate himself from the dangerous predicament in which he had fallen.

But there was nothing that seemed to offer any promise of assistance, and he began struggling again, only to desist after a few moments, realizing how foolish was the attempt, for every effort he put forth only served to sink him deeper in the boggy quicksand.

Down he sank, slowly and gradually, till he was up to his waist in the relentless and encompassing sands. Then, realizing that he was unable to extricate himself, Dick, because of his utterly helpless situation, gave vent to a despairing cry and called loudly for help.

Again and again he called, but there came no response. All remained quiet around him. There was no sign or likelihood of assistance from any source. And by now he had sunk till he was halfway from his waist to his armpits. He was held as if by giant hands, and he realized that he could not escape without assistance--and help was certainly not forthcoming.



He was held as if by giant hands.

Dick Dare had been in lots of tight places in his life, but never had he been in the danger that threatened him now. He felt that he was doomed, that he would go to a terrible, horrible death, there beneath the smothering slime of the boggy quicksand. He thought of the loved ones at home, of his brother, his comrades, and the great Cause for which he was to offer up his young life. Now he was to be blotted out and no one would ever know the awful nature of his death.

## CHAPTER VII—In the Tories' Hands Again

Herbert Miller, the young schoolteacher, when he heard the demand made by Hank Sprowl, felt that he was in great danger. He realized that the Tories were bad men, and that they might kill him, if they got hold of him again. And as he had a young man's desire to live, he made up his mind not to let them get hold of him, if possible to avoid the contingency.

The room Miller was in was at the front of the house, and that was the reason he heard the words of the Tory. It was a starlight night, and stepping to the window, the teacher looked out and downward. He saw several dark forms standing before the house. There were six or seven of the scoundrels, Miller decided, and that would be too many for him to try to fight against, even with the assistance of Mr. Santon. Furthermore, as the young man had no wish to get his friends into trouble, he made up his mind that the best thing he could do would be to make his escape.

With this idea in mind, he left the front room, and made his way into a chamber at the rear. Opening the window, he looked out and about. There was no one in sight, so the young man decided that he would be able to leap to the ground and get safely away.

Climbing cautiously over the ledge, he seized hold of the window-sill and lowered himself till he hung suspended at full length. Then he relaxed his hold and dropped. He alighted on his feet all right and unhurt, and turned to leave--when around the corner rushed four of the Tories.

"Here he is!" yelled one. "Grab 'im, men."

They dashed forward and seized Miller before he could make his escape, and although he fought desperately, he was overpowered. The rest of the gang came rushing around the corner, just as the four had gotten the better of the teacher, and his arms were quickly tied together behind his back.

They conducted him around to the front of the house, and Sprowl calling Mr. Santon to the door gave him a rough talking to. "If ever we ketch ye harborin' or helpin' another rebel, John Santon, we'll drive ye out uv ther country. D'ye hear?" he said in conclusion.

"Yes, I hear," was the reply. There was an angry look on Mr. Santon's face, but he did not say much, for he realized that it would not take many words from him to cause the ruffians to seize him and give him a rough handling, the same as they likely intended doing with Miller. He did ask, however, what they proposed doing with the teacher.

"Oh, thet's our bizness," was the reply.

"We're goin' to try to do enuff, this time, to discourage him frum tryin' to stay aroun' in this part of the country, though. Ye may be sure uv thet."

Then they set out through the woods, Miller in their midst. "Don't worry about me, Mr. Santon," the

teacher called back over his shoulder. "They won't dare do me serious injury."

"Oh, won't we, hey?" growled Sprowl. "Wai, mebbly ye'll change yer mind afore we git through with ye."

"Oh, father, I'm afraid they'll kill him!" half-moaned Lizzie, when the group had disappeared amid the trees.

"I don't hardly think they will dare do that, Lizzie," was the sober reply. "But I fear they will give him rough treatment."

"Can't we prevent it somehow, father?" There was great eagerness in the voice of the girl. It was evident that she was deeply moved. The fact was, that she thought a great deal of Herbert Miller. And he, on his part, thought a great deal of Lizzie Santon.

Mr. Santon shook his head. "I'm afraid we can't, Lizzie," he said. "There are seven of them."

"But, we can take our rifles, and follow them, father, and if they go to injure Mr. Miller, we can shoot some of them. I can shoot as good as any man, you know, father."

Mr. Santon hesitated a few moments, and then said: "Very well, Lizzie. We'll follow them, and perhaps we may be able to drive them away, if they try to injure Mr. Miller. Let's hurry, or they'll get so far away we won't be able to follow them."

He seized his rifle, and the girl did the same. With a few words to Mrs. Santon, they left the house, and set out through the timber. But they had gone only about fifty yards, when a rough voice challenged them.

"Stop whar ye are!" called the voice, threateningly. "Ef ye come any funder, we'll plug ye. Hank said as how mebbly ye'd try to foller us, an' made us stay behin' to watch fur ye. Now, ef ye value yer lives, ye'll turn aroun' an' go right back ter the house, an' stay thar. Ye hear?"

"We may as well go back, Lizzie," said her father. "They'll shoot us if we try to follow now."

"Thet's what we will, Santon. Ye're talkin' sense. Git back to ther house, now, an' stay thar. Ef ye come out ag'in, we'll shoot furst an' mebbly talk arterwards."

"Come, Lizzie," said Mr. Santon, sadly, and they turned and went back to the house.

"Sprowl left a couple of his men to watch and prevent us from following," explained Mr. Santon to his wife, and Lizzie, with tears of disappointment in her eyes, went up to her room.

In the meantime, Sprowl and four of his companions--he had, as we know, left two men behind to watch Santon's house--made their way onward till they had gone about two miles, and then they came to a log cabin in a hollow. There was a thick growth of trees and many clumps of bushes all around, which would make it difficult for a chance passerby to see the cabin, even though his path led within a short distance of it.

Here the ruffians stopped, and Sprowl ordered that Miller be stripped to the waist.

"We giv' ye a coat uv tar an' feathers, ther other time," he said, "but this time we're goin' to give ye ther blamedest lickin' ye ever got in your life. Tie 'im to that tree, boys." The last words to his men, who had already quickly divested the teacher of his clothing, and he stood there, naked to the waist.

"You will be sorry for this, Hank Sprowl!" said Miller. "You had better not commit this outrage."

"Shut up," was the brief reply. "Ye're goin' ter git a lickin' ye'll remember to yer dyin' day, an' then ye' hev twenty-four hours to leave ther country in. Get the switches, men, an' begin."

A bundle of switches was produced from the nearby cabin, and a couple of the ruffians took each a heavy switch, several feet in length. Stationing themselves on either side of their intended victim, they lifted the switches and held them poised, waiting for the word from Sprowl to strike.

"Ready?" said Sprowl. "Go ahead. Give 'im a lickin' thet'll last 'im a lifetime."

Herbert Miller set his teeth and waited.

## CHAPTER VIII—Tim And Fritz At Work

Soon after Dick, Tom and Ben left the patriot encampment, to go in search of the British army under General Arnold, Tim and Fritz got to discussing the matter, and they decided that they could do some good work in that line also.

"Vy can't ve go und make un efford to find der retgoads, Tim?" was Fritz's query.

"Sure an' there's no reason why we can't, Dootchy," said Tim. "An' it's mesilf has a good moind to go an' ask the captain to let us go an' look fur the ridcoats."

"Yah, go und ask him, Tim," urged Fritz, eagerly. "I would lige to go on such a trip as dot, und verily dot is so."

So Tim, thus backed up, asked Captain Morgan to let him and Fritz go in search of the encampment of the redcoats.

"Why, the Dare boys and Ben Foster have just gone to do that," said the captain.

"Yis, but there is no tellin' what direction to go to foind the ridcoats, captain," said Tim, "an' we can go a different directions an' mebbly will foind the encampment av the inimy before the other byes do."

"Oh, well, you may go, then," laughed the captain, "but be careful, and don't get captured yourself."

"We'll be careful, captain, sure an' we will."

"Very well."

Tim thanked the captain, hastened back and reported his success to Fritz, who was delighted. They made prompt preparations, and a few minutes later they set out.

They started in a different direction from that taken by the boys, but Tim and Fritz were not very good at woodcraft, and gradually their course was changed, till finally unwittingly they were following almost in the steps of the three youths. They supposed, agreeable to their proposal, that they were going in an entirely different direction.

Thus it happened that Tim and Fritz came to the top of the ridge, from which the three youths had seen the camp of the party of redcoats, and reaching there about an hour after the youths had left. They stopped to rest, and soon caught sight of the redcoats, in the same manner as the youths had done.

They were greatly excited at once. "Sure an' we've found thim alriddy!" exclaimed Tim.

"Yah, dot is so," agreed Fritz. "But dere are not many dere, Tim. Dis is not der big encampment."

"Ye are roight, Fritz. This is a small party thot is out on a foraging expedition, loikely."

"Ve must sby on dem, Tim, und find ould vot dey are doin' here," said Fritz.

"Roight ye are, me bye. An' it's Tim Murphy can do thot worruk, sure an' it is."

"Ah righd. You go und do dot vork, Tim. I vill sday here und be ready to come to your assistance if you ged into drubble, already."

"Thot's all roight. Here Oi go, Fritz."

Then Tim moved slowly and cautiously forward, heading for the encampment of the redcoats.

He was not so skillful at this kind of work as was Dick Dare, but he did pretty well in this instance, and by going very slowly, he managed to get over the ground without making much noise.

Closer and closer crept Tim, and finally he came to a stop behind a tree about fifty yards from the encampment. He could hear what the redcoats said, but they were talking about matters of no particular interest, and Tim did not learn of their intention of plundering and burning the patriot settlement.

Tim saw that there was only a small party of the redcoats, and realizing that this was only a detachment from Arnold's army, he decided to return to where he had left Fritz, and they would go on their way and try to find the main encampment.

So he turned and slipped back in the direction from which he had come, and when he neared the top of the ridge and looked for his comrade, he greatly to his surprise did not see him. Tim supposed Fritz was seated behind a tree, however, and thought nothing of it, but when he reached the point where he had left the Dutch youth, sure as fate Fritz was not there.

Tim looked all around, in surprise. Nowhere could he see Fritz. Glancing toward the redcoat camp, and deciding that they would not hear him, he sounded a signal that they often used to notify one of the other's whereabouts.

Then he listened, but did not hear any reply. Again he gave the signal, with the same result.

"Where has Dootchy gone, Oi wondther," muttered Tim, scratching his head. "Sure, an' he's so big thot av he was innywheres aroun' here Oi ought to be able to see him."

He looked in all directions, carefully, searchingly, but Fritz was not to be seen, which was very puzzling, and Tim did not understand it at all.

"Thot does bate all," murmured Tim. "What shall Oi do? Shall Oi stay here, or go in search av him?"

This was a problem, and Tim sat down, the better to figure it out.

He was sitting there, his back against a tree, trying to determine where Fritz could be, when suddenly there was a rustling and scratching sound above him, and then something hit him on the head and shoulders, knocking him to the ground and almost stunning him.

Nevertheless Tim scrambled up hastily, and was greatly amazed to see his comrade, Fritz, lying on his back on the ground a few yards distant, blinking up at the sky as if dazed. An exclamation of anger and amazement escaped the Irish soldier's lips.

"Fritz, ye Dutch rascal, ye, where did ye drop from, innyhow?" he cried.

Fritz blinked a few more times, and then slowly rose to a sitting posture, looked at Tim, grinned somewhat sheepishly, and then said: "From der dreetop, Tim."

"Oh, ye fell out av the tree, did ye?" the Irish soldier remarked.

"Yah," nodded the Dutchman. "I vos glimbin' down, alretty, an' my hold slipped und down I fell kerthump."

"I should say ye did. Ye fell kerthump on top av me head, sure an' ye did. Why didn't ye tell me ye was comin'?"

"I didn't think uf dot, Tim," was the reply. "Und I'm sorriness dot I bumped you."

"What was ye doin' up in the tree?"



"I vos loogin' around. I thought dot I mighd see der big camp uf der retgoads."

"Well, did ye?"

Fritz shook his head. "No, I saw only der trees und timber," he said.

"Well, what shall we do now? Go an' look for the big camp of the ridcoats?"

"Vot do you say to stayin' und keepin' watch on dese retgoads till after dark, Tim?" said Fritz. "Maybe dey vill go to der big engampment, und den ve gan follow dem."

"Sure an' thot's a good oidea, Fritz. We'll do thot."

## CHAPTER IX—Tim and Fritz

Tim and Fritz settled down and made themselves as comfortable as possible, and waited patiently for the coming of darkness. They trusted that the redcoats would make some kind of move by that time, and they hoped and believed that the move would be in the direction of the main encampment of the British.

The two had brought some food with him, and when evening came, they ate a bite, after which they took turns going down and getting a drink at a little creek at the foot of the ridge.

As soon as dusk overspread the scene, they stole down closer to the encampment, and took up their station behind trees within fifty yards of the redcoats. They could hear the spoken words of the soldiers now, and heard them talking of going to a patriot settlement, of plundering it and burning the houses.

"So thot's what they are afther doin', eh?" muttered Tim. "Well, it's mean spalpanes they are, an' thot's a fact."

"Yah," replied Fritz, cautiously. "Dot vos been a pretty mean vork vot dey are planning to do, alretty."

"Let's slip aroun' an' thry to get to the settlement an' warn the patriots, Fritz," whispered Tim.

"All righd, ve vill do dot."

They were just about to start, when the redcoats suddenly broke camp--all they had to do was to pick up their muskets and start--and set out through the woods. Naturally exclamations of disappointment and dismay escaped the lips of the two.

"Dey're goin' to der settlement now!" exclaimed Fritz.

"Yis. Well, let's follow thim. Mebby we can do somethin' to hilp the patriots."

"Maybe so, Tim. Ve vill see abouid dot, anyhow."

So they followed the party of redcoats, keeping about two hundred yards behind them, and after a walk of about a mile and a half, they paused at the edge of a clearing of perhaps a hundred acres, and at the farther side could be seen the houses of the settlers.

What struck Tim and Fritz as queer was the fact that they could not see any lights in any of the houses, and this fact may have been noticed by the redcoats, for they hastened forward at a swifter pace.

"Looks loike there ain't any people at home, Dootchy," said Tim.

"Dot is der vay id loogs to me, Tim," was the reply.

"Oi hope thot is the case."

"Yah, so do I."

Feeling that they would be safe in doing so, Tim and Fritz followed the redcoats, though staying farther behind than when they were in the timber, for even in the dusk they were more likely to be seen out here in the open. The redcoats had their attention centered on the cluster of houses, however, and were not likely to look behind them, so the two felt that they probably would not be seen.

They were not more than a hundred yards behind the redcoats when the latter reached the houses. Tim and Fritz stopped and now lay down on the ground, and watched and listened.

They saw lights appear in the houses presently, and heard the voices of the redcoats raised in tones of seeming anger. Tim chuckled and said:

"They seem to be disappointed, Dootchy, me bye."

"Yah, dot is der vay id seems, Tim," was the reply.

"Looks loike the settlers found out thot the ridcoats was comin' an' slipped away, hey?"

"Yah, dot seems to be der vay uf id."

"Let's move up closer, Dootchy."

"Allrighd."

They rose to their feet and approached the cluster of houses, and on reaching the nearest one, they peered in at the window. There were two or three redcoats in the room, in which there was little furniture or household goods of any description, and the British soldiers were talking and

gesticulating angrily.

"Der settlers moved ould und took der important goods mit dem," whispered Fritz.

"So it would seem, Fritz," was the reply.

Then they went to the next house and looked in, and the scene there was practically the same as at the other house. After looking through the window a few moments, the two went to the next house, and found the same situation there.

"The settlers all got away before the redcoats got here, an' they took their valuable goods wid thim," said Tim.

"Yah, und der retgoads are pretty mad, alretty," replied Fritz.

"Thot's what they are, an' av they lay oyes on us, it'll go hard wid us, Fritz, me bye."

"Dot is so. But ve must not let dem see us."

Just at this moment some redcoats emerged from the house beyond where the two soldiers stood, and they were talking excitedly.

"They've gone into the swamp, that's certain," the two heard one of the redcoats say. "And we'll follow them. We'll have that plunder, in spite of the trick they have played. We'll follow them into the swamp."

Tim and Fritz dropped to the ground, close beside the building, and remained there till the redcoats had come forth from the houses and had all set out in a direction which the two supposed led to the swamp, and then they rose and followed.

"We'll kape afther thim, me bye," said Tim.

"Yah, ve vill do dot, Tim, und maybe ve gan do somedings to help der settlers, alretty."

They followed the redcoats to the edge of the swamp, and remained concealed till the British soldiers lighted a torch and set out along the tortuous path into the swamp. Then they sat down, to wait and discuss the situation.

"There's goin' to be a foight over in the swamp, Dootchy, an' we won't be in it," said Tim, regretfully.

"Yah," agreed Fritz. "I would lige to take a hand in dot fighd, but ve gouldn't keep on der path in der dark, alretty."

"No, we'll have to stay here an' wait till the redcoats come back, Oi guiss," said Tim.

## CHAPTER X—To the Rescue

They had been sitting there perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, watching the torch carried by the leader of the British force bobbing about in the swamp, when they suddenly heard voices right near them. The next moment they saw several dark forms making their way through the timber. The two listened to the conversation of the strangers, and learned that they were Tories, on their way to the home of a patriot, one John Santon, who, it seemed, had taken into his home a patriot school-teacher, after the latter had been given a coat of tar and feathers.

The Tories were going to take the teacher out, give him a whipping, and then give him twenty-four hours to get out of that part of the country.

The Tories were walking at a slow pace, and so the two patriots gained the above information before the party was out of hearing.

"Sure, an' what do ye say to followin' thim rascals an' thryin' to spoil their game, Fritz?" asked Tim.

"I think dot is der thing to do, Tim," was the reply. "Der retgoads vill not be back here for a long while, und ve can't do anything to dena when dey do come, for dere are too many uf dem."

"Roight ye are, an' mebbly we can help the fellow what thim rapsCALLIONS are talkin' av takin' out an' whippin'."

"Mebby so, Tim. Ve vill try id, uf you say so."

"Well, Oi do say so. Let's follow thim, me bye."

So they rose, promptly set out on the trail of the Tories, and were soon close enough to them to hear their conversation. As it was pretty dark, there was not much danger of their being discovered.

When the Tories reached the Santon home, and knocked on the door, Tim and Fritz were close at hand. They listened to the conversation between Santon and the Tories, and when the school-teacher was captured and the Tories started away, with him in their midst, Tim and Fritz moved away through the woods, keeping the party under observation. When they came upon the cabin in the gully, they guessed that this might be the spot the Tories were aiming for. So they stationed themselves behind trees near the end of the cabin, awaiting the approach of the party.

The two patriots watched the Tories, who had lighted a torch, so as to see how to do the work they intended doing. When they saw the ruffians tie their prisoner to a tree, after stripping him to the waist, and one on either side with a heavy switch in his hand, get ready to administer a whipping, Tim and Fritz decided that they would not stand there and be witnesses to such an affair. There were only five of the ruffians, and as the two had each two pistols, they believed they could drive

the Tories away.

Tim whispered instructions to Fritz, both drew their pistols, and just as the two ruffians with the switches were about to strike, the patriots fired their pistols.

Both the bullets took effect. The patriots had not tried to kill, but they wanted to wound the Tories, and succeeded. They had aimed at the two who were holding the switches, and at the sound of the reports the two ruffians uttered exclamations of pain and amazement. Dropping the switches, they staggered away from their intended victim.

"Foire ag'in, comrades, an' thin charge the spalpanes!" cried Tim at this instant, and firing the other two pistols, they succeeded in wounding Sprowl, whose howl of pain was loud and prolonged. Then the ruffians all hastened away, the two that were not injured running swiftly ahead, while the others traveled as fast as they could.

"Afther thim!" yelled Tim, loudly, to add to the fright of the fleeing Tories, but in a low voice to Fritz he said: "Don't follow thim. We've got thim running, an' so let thim go. We'll set this poor chap free."

He stepped to the spot and cut the rope binding Miller to the tree. The teacher was grateful to his new found friends and thanked the two heartily. "You have done me a great kindness," he said, "and I appreciate it, I assure you. Those ruffians would have given me a terrible beating had you not intervened."

"They looked capable av doin' thot, sir," said Tim.

"Yah, dey vos mean-loogin' fellers, und dot is so," said Fritz.

"Yes, those same scoundrels gave me a coat of tar and feathers this afternoon," continued Miller. "But they were not satisfied with that, it seems, but wanted to give me a beating."

"Well, we gave thim a little somethin' to remimber this affair by, Oi'm thinkin'," chuckled Tim.

"I'm glad you did. And, now, who are you, if I may ask, and where are you from? I don't think you live in this part of the country."

"We are soldiers," said Fritz. "Ve belong mit der army."

"I didn't know there was a patriot army in this part of the country," said Miller.

"We just got here," explained Tim. "There is a rigimint, an' it is encamped about twinty miles from here."

"Ve haf come down here to fighd Arnold," said Fritz.

"That is good. He has been causing the patriots a lot of trouble since he came down into Virginia."

"Thot is what we have understood," said Tim, "An' we have seen some av their work, already."

"How is that?" with an air of interest.

"Well, ye know there is a patriot sittlemint a couple av moiles from here, av coorse."

"Yes. What about it?"

"Why, a party av about twenty ridcoats wint there, this avenin', intendin' to rob the sittlers an' burn the houses, but whin they got there, the sittlers were all gone, an' had taken their household goods wid thim."

"Ah, they must have been warned of the approach of the redcoats. I am glad of that."

"Yis, an' they wint into a swamp thot is about a moile or so from the sittlemint."

"Ah, they will likely be safe there."

"Ve ain'd so sure aboutid dot," said Fritz. "Der retgoads haf followed der settlers into der swamp."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Miller. "That is bad."

"Yis, so it is," agreed Tim. "Fritz an' meself were goin' to stay at the place where the path inters the swamp, an' wait till the ridcoats came out, an' learn what success they had, but thot party av Tories came past, an' we heard thim talkin' about givin' a rebel school-teacher a whippin', an' so, thinkin' we could mebby do more good by followin' thim, we did so."

"And I'm glad you did. But, supposing we go to the point where the path enters the swamp? The redcoats are likely not back out of the swamp yet, and--"

At this moment the sound of musket-shots came to their hearing, and Tim exclaimed "They're foightin', now!"

## CHAPTER XI—The Tories Again

"You are right," said Miller. "I hope the settlers will be able to drive the redcoats away from the island."

"Mebby dey vill be able to do dot," said Fritz.

"Let's load our pistols and go to the point where the path reaches the mainland," said Tim. "Oi would loike to be there whin the ridcoats get back."

"Yes, let's go at once," said Miller. "But, if you don't mind, we will go past the Santon home. It isn't

much out of our way, and I want them to know that I was rescued from the hands of the Tories and was not injured."

"We'll have plinty av toime to do thot, an' thin get to our destination before the ridcoats get there," said Tim.

So they set out, and presently reached the home of the Santons. The family was still up, and when they saw Miller, free and uninjured, they were delighted. When told that the two patriots, Tim Murphy and Fritz Schmockenburg, had rescued the teacher and driven the Tories away, after wounding three of them, the Santons shook hands with the patriot soldiers and complimented them on their good work.

Then Miller explained about the affair at the patriot settlement, how the patriots were on the island in the swamp, how the redcoats had followed them there, and that the sound of firing had come from that direction, so it was likely that a fight was taking place between the settlers and the redcoats.

"And we are going to the point where the path joins the mainland, so as to be there when the British soldiers return, with the hope that we may be able to learn how the affair came out," said Miller in conclusion.

"I would go with you, but I think that I had better stay here, for fear those Tories, angry by the treatment these men gave them, might come here to get revenge on me," said Mr. Santon.

"I would advise that you fasten the doors," said Miller. "Though the rascals may not bother you."

"Av they do come, ye foire two or three shots, an' we'll get here as quick as possible," said Tim.

"Yah, ve vill come und shoots der Tories a few more times," said Fritz.

"Very well, I will fire the signal shots, if the Tories put in an appearance," said Mr. Santon.

Then the three said good-night and took their departure, promising to return after the redcoats came back out of the swamp and tell the Santons what had taken place on the island.

When the three reached a point near where the path stretched from, the mainland, they found all quiet, and settled down securely hidden to await the return of the enemy. The firing had ceased, and so the fight was either suspended or had ended.

The three were eager to learn whether the patriots had held the redcoats at bay and driven them back, or not, and hoped that such had been the case.

They sat there, talking in low tones, and keeping a sharp lookout toward the interior of the swamp, and presently they caught sight of a light bobbing about in the swamp. The redcoats were returning.

"We'll soon know how the affair turned out," said Miller.

"Yah, so ve vill," said Fritz.

Closer and closer drew the light, and presently the voices of the soldiers could be heard distinctly. Listening eagerly, the three patriots learned that the redcoats had failed in their attempt to reach the island, and that they had been driven back with two or three of their number wounded.

"We had better move further back into the woods," said Miller.

"Yis, thot will be best," said Tim.

The three rose and made their way back into the forest a further distance of twenty-five or thirty yards, and took up positions behind trees. Here they stood, waiting, and when the redcoats came onto the mainland, and stopped and settled down, as if to make a camp for the night, the three slipped up nearer, and were enabled to hear the conversation of the British soldiers.

They learned how the redcoats had been driven back with comparative ease by the patriots on the island, owing to the fact that the path was so narrow only two or three of the soldiers could advance at a time. And they learned also that it was the intention of the redcoats to establish a siege and try to starve the patriots into surrendering.

"Sure, an' the spalpanes are determined to get their han's on the household goods av' the patriots," said Tim in a low voice to Miller, who replied in a whisper that such seemed to be the case.

Then, after a few minutes, the three patriots withdrew to a distance great enough so that their voices could not be heard by the redcoats, and held a council. After due consideration, it was decided that they could do no good by remaining there, and finally Tim was struck with a bright idea, which was that he or Fritz should return to the encampment of the patriot force and get a company of soldiers to come to the rescue of the settlers in the swamp. He wondered why he had not thought of it before.

"Which av us shall go, Fritz?" he asked.

"I vould go," was the reply, "but you gan go faster as vot I gan, Tim, so mebbly you vos better go."

"All roight, I'll go," said Tim. "An' you two fellows will go to the Santon home, Oi suppose."

"Yes, we will go there, for to-night, at any rate," replied Miller. "We could do nothing here, and we might be of assistance to Mr. Santon, if the Tories come back to bother him."

"Yah, dot is so," said Fritz.

"All roight. Well, I'll be goin'. Good-by, me byes."

They said good-by, and Tim set out through the woods in the direction of the patriot encampment, while Miller and Fritz made their way toward the home of the patriot, John Santon.

Miller and Fritz walked at a moderate pace, and when they drew near the Santon home, they heard the sound of pounding, as of somebody hammering against the door with a club. They hastened forward when they heard this, for they guessed that the Tories had again put in an appearance.

Such proved to be the case, for they heard a gruff voice calling to Santon to come and open the door or it would be broken down, and pistols in hand--Fritz having given one of his to Miller--they advanced till within about ten yards of the Tories, of whom there seemed to be five or six. Then pausing, they leveled their pistols and fired. Immediately afterward they dashed forward, yelling at the top of their voices.

The shots, followed by the yells of the two, coming so unexpectedly, startled the Tories greatly, and with exclamations of amazement and dismay they fled at the top of their speed, disappearing around the corner of the house very quickly.

The two patriots followed to the corner of the house, where they paused, shouting and yelling in the loudest and fiercest voice they could command. Then they listened and heard the brush crackling as the fugitives ran onward at the top of their speed.

"I don't believe they will come back here again," said Miller.

"I don'd vos think so, minesellufs," responded Fritz.

Then they knocked on the door, and Miller called out: "Open the door, Mr. Santon. It is Miller and one of the patriot soldiers that was here a while ago."

There was a sound of the bar being taken down within, and then the door was opened by Mr. Santon.

"Come in," invited the patriot. "I'm glad you came just when you did, for those Tories were crying fierce threats, and would likely have handled me roughly, had they got hold of me."

"Veil, uf dey don'd vos fall und break their necks runnin' through der timber, id vill be funny," said Fritz. "I don'd think dey vill be back to bother you again to-night."

"I hope that you are right," said the patriot, and then, when they had entered, he shut the door and put the bar in place again.

The other members of the family were still up, and they gave Miller and Fritz a joyous welcome. It was evident that they were glad to see the two, and that they felt much safer with them there.

"Did you learn how the affair at the island in the swamp turned out, Mr. Miller?" asked Lizzie Santon, eagerly.

"Yes," was the reply. "The patriot settlers succeeded in driving the redcoats away." And then he told what they had learned by listening to the conversation of the British soldiers after their return from their unsuccessful attempt to reach the island in the swamp.

"Oh, I am so glad to hear that the patriot families are safe!" exclaimed Mrs. Santon.

"Yes, but they are still in danger," said Miller. And he told how the redcoats were going to keep up a siege. But he also told how Tim Murphy had gone to get a company of patriot soldiers to come and drive the raiders away, and rescue the patriots. He added that he did not have any doubts but that this would be done successfully.

## CHAPTER XII—The Pathfinders

Next morning, after breakfast, Fritz Schmockenburg and Herbert Miller said they would go and reconnoiter the enemy's position, and see what they were doing.

"Be careful," said Mr. Santon. "Don't run into any of the enemy's traps."

"We will be careful," said Miller.

"Yah, ve von't let dem gatch us," confidently rejoined Fritz.

So they said good-by, took their departure, and in about twenty minutes were close enough to the British to see that all was quiet in the encampment.

The redcoats were sitting around, talking and taking it easy, and did not seem to have any fear of being attacked, for they did not have any sentinels posted. Doubtless they had not yet learned that a patriot regiment was in the vicinity.

"They're going to stay there and watch the path, and keep the patriot settlers from leaving the swamp," determined Miller. "Doubtless the settlers have not very much in the way of food supplies with them on the island, and the redcoats figure on starving them out."

"Yah, dot is der vay uf id, I bet you," said Fritz.

Miller was silent and thoughtful a few minutes, and then said: "I wonder if there is another path leading to the swamp?"

"Uf der vos, der patriot seddlers could leave der island," said the Dutch soldier.

"There might be a path reaching almost to the island," said Miller. "The path might not be seen from the island, and yet might be reached by making a bridge of a fallen tree, and if that were the

case, the settlers could escape."

"Ve mighd loog for der path, alretty," said Fritz. "Ve haf nothing else to do."

"All right, that is what we will do, Fritz. Come."

They moved slowly and cautiously away, and presently reached the edge of the swamp at a point about a half of a mile from the encampment of the British soldiers. The intervening trees and bushes made it impossible for the redcoats to see them.

They then started along the edge of the shore of the swamp, and kept a sharp lookout for any sign of a solid path. They went slowly, so as to be sure and not by any possibility overlook what they were in search of.

On they went, keeping their eyes on the shoreline, and they had gone perhaps a mile further, when they suddenly came to a point where there was a path leading into the swamp.

"Here is a starting point," called Miller, "but how far it extends into the swamp it is impossible to say."

"Ve vill soon find ould," said Fritz.

"Yes, come along, Fritz. I'll take the lead, as I am lighter and more active than you."

"All righd."

They started into the swamp, and proceeded slowly and cautiously. The path crooked this way and that, winding and twisting about, but gradually extending deeper and deeper into the swamp, and the two felt encouraged to proceed.

"Mebby ve reach der island afder awhile," said Fritz.

"Yes, I hope that we may be able to do so," was the reply. "Or at any rate, I hope that we may get close enough so that the intervening space may be bridged over."

"Yah, dot would be all righd."

On they went, slowly and carefully. At some points the path was not more than a foot in width, but so long as they had that much solid ground under their feet they were well pleased.

On and still on into the swamp they went, and when they had penetrated a quarter of a mile, and had stopped a few minutes, to rest and try to figure out the continuation of the path, they suddenly heard a voice calling, it seemed, for help.

"Did you hear that?" exclaimed Miller, in excitement.

"Yah, somebody is lost der schwamp in, alretty," replied Fritz.

"Right. And likely it is one of the men from the settlers' party. Possibly one is trying to reach the mainland, and has got as far as he can--or has fallen into the bog; and is in danger of losing his life."

"Maybe dot is der vay uf id," said Fritz.

"Let us hurry on," said Miller. "Perhaps the path we are on will take us close to the poor fellow, and we may be able to render him some assistance."

"Maybe so," agreed Fritz. "You lead der vay, Misder Miller, und I vill keep up mit you uf I gan."

So they hastened onward, moving through the swamp as swiftly as possible, and soon the voice came to them louder and plainer, and Fritz uttered an exclamation:

"I think dot voice sounds lige der voice uf Dick Dare, alretty," he said.

"Do you think so?" asked Miller.

"Yah, I am sure uf id."

"Then he has tried to make his way through the swamp and has fallen into the bog, likely, and unless we get to him pretty soon, and render him assistance, he may sink beneath the surface and be smothered to death."

"Let us hurry, then, Misder Miller. I don'd vos vant Dick to ged choked mit der bog, alretty."

They hastened onward, making, for Fritz, wonderfully fast progress, and a few minutes later they caught sight of someone up nearly to his arm-pits in the bog. And at sight of him an exclamation escaped the lips of Fritz.

"Id is Dick!" he cried. "Und he is avay down in der bog. Ve must save him, Misder Miller." Then he lifted up his voice and called out loudly: "Dick! Dick Dare! Here ve are. Ve haf come to hellup you ould."

Dick looked in their direction, and caught sight of them. "Good for you, Fritz, old comrade," he cried, eagerly. "Hurry and get over here as close as possible, and help me out of this."

"Ve are goming, Dick," said Fritz. "Lead on, Misder Miller."

"I'll do the best I can."

Miller advanced as swiftly as he could, following the winding of the path, but suddenly he found that there was no continuation. He had reached the end of the stretch of solid earth. And they were still twenty-five or thirty yards from Dick Dare.

"This is as far as the path extends, Mr. Dare," said Miller, a disappointed tone to his voice. "What shall we do?"

"I hardly know, stranger," was the reply.

"If you had a rope to throw to me, you could pull me out; but you have no rope?"

"No. This is a difficult proposition, sure. But we must reach you and get you out of there, somehow."

"Yes, and you will have to hurry, for I don't like this situation at all."

"Have you anything to suggest?" asked Miller.

"The best plan, to my mind, would be to climb from tree to tree, till you reach this one nearest to me, and then perhaps you can break off a limb and reach it down to me."

"I'll try that, Mr. Dare."

### CHAPTER XIII—In the Swamp

Miller managed to spring across a boggy place to a tree a few feet distant, and then he climbed up into it. He worked his way out on a limb, and got from that tree to the next one, then on into the next tree, and kept this up till he was in the tree nearest to Dick.

Then he took his knife from his pocket and with great rapidity cut off a limb about the size of his wrist and reached the end down to Dick. He grasped it eagerly and held on tightly, while Miller pulled steadily and strongly.

It was quite a while before the pulling had any perceptible effect and then it was seen that Dick was slowly but surely rising out of the bog.

"I guess you are going to get out, all right, Mr. Dare," said Miller. "There is lots of suction to that bog, though."

"Yes. You are gradually pulling me up, and if I can get to that tree, I'll be all right."

"I'll get you there in a few minutes, Mr. Dare."

Miller kept on pulling till he got Dick out of the bog, and then he worked his way back to the main body of the tree, while Dick worked his way along on the top of the bog, and presently reached the tree. Here he stood, holding to the tree, while he rested for a few minutes, and then he climbed up among the branches, and was soon beside Miller.

"Thank you, very much, stranger," Dick said. "You have saved my life."

"I guess that's so," was the reply. "But you are welcome, and I am glad to have been able to render you assistance. All the more because you are a friend of Fritz, yonder, so he has told me, and he and his comrade, Tim Murphy, rescued me from a situation almost as unpleasant as the one I have rescued you from."

"Indeed? I am surprised to see Fritz. I left him at the patriot encampment twenty miles from here, yesterday."

"Yes. Well, he and his comrade, Tim Murphy, came to this region yesterday and they rescued me from the hands of a party of Tories that were going to give me a whipping with switches. They had already given me a coat of tar and feathers the same afternoon a few hours before."

"Then of course you are a patriot."

"Yes. I am the school-teacher at the school about a mile from the Tory settlement, and about two miles from the patriot settlement. But the Tories don't like me, because I took the part of the patriot children at the school, when the Tory children were running over them, and so they did as I have told you."

"I suppose you won't teach school there any more, then?" enquired Dick.

"No. I hardly know what I shall do."

"Better join the patriot army," urged Dick.

"I might do that. I'll think about it anyway."

Then, Dick having rested sufficiently, in the meantime having gotten his clothing into more presentable and comfortable shape, they began climbing from tree to tree, and presently joined Fritz on the end of the pathway.

"I'm glad to see you safe out of der bog, Dick," said Fritz, seizing the youth's hand and shaking it vigorously. "I was afraid dot ve Gould not get you out."

"I'm mighty glad you two happened around just when you did," said Dick. "But where is Tim?"

"He went back to der encampment last night," was the reply. "He is going to bring some of der solchers here to drive der redcoats away and let der patriot settlers come back out of der swamp."

"Hurrah! That is good. The soldiers ought to get here pretty soon, then, if he went last night."

"Yah, dey will get here pretty soonness, Dick."

"Good. Then we will go back to the mainland, and meet them."

So the three set out, following the path to the shore, and then they made their way in a direction that would lead them around to a point half a mile from the encampment of the redcoats. Here they stopped, and Dick went down to a little stream that flowed through the woods, and washed the

remainder of the mud from off his clothes.

Then he took up his position in a sunny spot near his comrades, where his garments would dry off quickly.

They had been there perhaps an hour and a half when they saw the patriot soldiers coming. There were about a company of the soldiers, and at their head with great importance stamped on every line of his freckled Irish face, strode Tim Murphy. As they drew nearer, Dick recognized Captain Morgan and some of the soldiers, and knew that it was his own company that was advancing.

A few minutes later the soldiers reached the spot where Dick, Fritz and Mr. Miller were, and halted. After greetings had been exchanged, the situation of affairs was explained to Captain Morgan, who listened attentively, and said that they would advance cautiously and try to take the redcoats by surprise.

"That will be the best plan, Captain Morgan," agreed Dick.

Then the party started forward, Dick, Fritz, Tim, Mr. Miller and Captain Morgan scouting in the lead, the soldiers following closely.

Forward they went, slowly, for they were eager to take the redcoats by surprise, and presently they caught sight of the temporary encampment. The British soldiers were sitting about in groups, talking and laughing, and evidently they did not in the least suspect that they were in danger.

But suddenly, as the patriots were looking, a man had seemed to rush into the encampment and say something in an excited manner, and make a gesture toward where the patriot soldiers were. Then the redcoats leaped to their feet and seized their muskets.

"That fellow has warned them!" cried Captain Morgan. "Forward, men. Charge the redcoats!"

## CHAPTER XIV—Routed

The patriot soldiers dashed forward, running rapidly through the heavy underbrush that intervened, and when they were in range, they were halted suddenly, at a command from the captain, who promptly ordered them to fire a volley.

The redcoats, seeing that a very considerably stronger force than their own was coming, had leaped behind trees, shielding themselves as best they could, so that the volley fired by the patriot soldiers did not do a great deal of damage, wounding a few, but not killing any.

The British soldiers then returned the fire, but the patriot soldiers, upon order of the Captain were crouching low, so that only one or two received slight flesh wounds, but no serious harm was done.

Again the captain yelled for the patriot soldiers to charge, and they did so, dashing forward at the top of their speed. At this the redcoats turned and fled at the top of their speed, evidently deciding that it would not be practicable for them to try to stand their ground.

After them went the patriots, firing their pistols and yelling loudly, and the redcoats ran as they probably had never run before. The patriot soldiers followed them perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then, not wishing to waste effort or ammunition, at a command from the captain, they stopped.

Returning now to the point where the raiders had been encamped, Dick Dare said that he would go to the island in the swamp and tell the patriot settlers that they could now come back to their homes, as the enemy had been driven away.

"I'll tell you what I would prefer you would do, Dick," said the captain. "I wish you would follow that party of redcoats. They will likely return to their main encampment, and by following them you will be enabled to learn where Arnold's force is. Somebody else can go to the island and carry the news to the settlers."

"True. Very well, Captain Morgan. I will go on the trail of the British soldiers, and as soon as I have located their encampment, I will return and bring you the information."

"Good, Dick. That will please me, for I want to get after that traitor, Arnold."

So Dick hastened away, through the forest, following the course taken by the redcoats. He went swiftly, for he wanted to get his eyes on the escaping soldiers, when he would have no great difficulty in keeping them under surveillance.

On he hastened, and about half an hour later he caught sight of the red uniforms of the soldiers bobbing about between the trees in front of him.

"There they are," murmured Dick, slackening his pace. "Good. Now I can follow them without much trouble."

The party continued on southward till they were nearly to the James River, and then they turned toward the east, and went in that direction several miles. Coming to an open spot on the top of a knoll, when they were at a distance of perhaps ten miles from the encampment by the swamp, that they had recently quitted so hurriedly, they again went into camp.

Dick stopped and from a position behind a tree, watched them with a feeling of disappointment. "They don't seem to have any intention of going to the main encampment, yet awhile, anyhow," he murmured. "Well, I will stay here and keep watch on them, and perhaps later on they will go to the British camp."

The redcoats remained where they were, and when finally noon came, they ate some food that they



carried in knap-sacks, and this made Dick feel hungry. He had come away in such a hurry that he had not thought of food.

He was determined not to lose sight of the British soldiers, however, so he stuck to his post, and waited for them to continue their journey.

About the middle of the afternoon Dick heard the sound of voices from behind him, and turned around quickly--to see Tom and Ben coming through the timber!

"Well, if there don't come the boys!" he murmured. "Now, I will have company, anyhow."

Fearing that the redcoats up on the top of the knoll might hear the voices of the youths, or catch sight of them, Dick hastened to meet the two, and when they discovered him, he made a cautioning gesture to which they gave heed for they stopped and waited for him to join them.

"Have you found the encampment of Arnold, Dick?" asked Tom, eagerly.

"No," was the reply. "The party of redcoats that we chased away have stopped here and gone into camp. I'm waiting for them to continue their journey."

"Well, I'm glad we caught up with you and we have brought you rations."

"Which is most welcome news."

They settled down behind a clump of bushes, and took it easy while Dick filled, in some degree, the empty void within him. They could peep through between the bushes and see the redcoats on the knoll; and Tom and Ben now told Dick that Tim and Fritz had come to the island and brought the news that the patriot soldiers were there and had driven the redcoats away.

"The patriot settlers came back to the mainland and went to their homes again," said Tom. "And the soldiers are encamped at the settlement, where they will stay till we get back with the news of the whereabouts of Arnold's main encampment."

"That is good," said Dick.

"Yes," said Ben. "What luck did you have, Dick, climbing through the tops of the trees?"

Dick then told them of his experience in the bog, and how Fritz and Herbert Miller had come to his rescue, just when he had begun to think he would perish in the bog.

"It was lucky that they happened to find that path and were trying to reach the island," said Tom.

"Yes, it was my only salvation. There was near to being an end to Dick Dare."

Slowly the time rolled away, and evening came, with the redcoats still encamped on the top of the knoll. As soon as it was dark, Dick crept up close to the encampment, and after listening a while, succeeded in hearing enough of the conversation of the soldiers to learn that it was their intention to remain there all night.

Dick made his way back to where Tom and Ben were and told them the news. "Such being the case," he said, "we don't need to stay right here and keep watch on the camp all the time. We will go and find a settler's home and get something to eat."

"That's the idea," said Tom. "I am beginning to feel pretty hungry."

"I could enjoy a bite, myself," said Ben.

"Come, then," said Dick. "We'll see if we can find a place where we can get something to eat."

He set out through the woodland with Tom and Ben close beside him. They traveled thus for perhaps half an hour, during which time darkness overtook them, then they suddenly caught sight of lights, through between the trees.

"There's a little settlement!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes, and there's something going on at one of the houses," said Ben. "See, that house near the center is lighted up more than the others, and I hear music."

"Sounds like a violin," said Tom. "Likely they are having a party there."

The youths were soon close to the house in question, and saw that there were a number of young people, young men and girls, in the front room, dancing to the music from a violin.

"A dance!" exclaimed Tom. "Let's go in, boys, and enjoy ourselves a while."

The other two willingly agreed. It was not often that they had found opportunity for amusement, so advancing to the door, Dick knocked.

## CHAPTER XV—At the Dance

The door was opened, presently, and a woman of middle age stood on the threshold.

"Good evening, ma'am," said Dick, bowing. "Myself and comrades would like to get something to eat, if you have any food to spare. We will pay for the food."

"Come right in," was the cordial reply. "There is plenty of food in the house and you will be welcome to all you can eat. Come in."

The youths entered, and the woman led the way to the kitchen, along a hall, past the room in which the young people were dancing. Here she invited the youths to be seated, and began placing food on a table.

"You don't belong in these parts, do you?" she asked, looking with some show of curiosity at the youths.

"No, ma'am," replied Dick. And then he asked, somewhat hesitatingly: "Is this--are the people around here, loyal to the king, or are they inclined to be patriotic?"

The woman looked at Dick rather sharply, and then after hesitating slightly, she said: "Well, I don't know just what to say, young man. You see, General Arnold has an army of British soldiers about twenty miles from here, and some of his soldiers have even come this far and done some plunderin' of patriot settlers, and--well, mebbly it wouldn't be best to say whether we are patriots or Tories. I don't know whether you are patriots or not, either," with another searching glance.

Dick shrewdly guessed, from her words and actions, that she was a patriot, and so he said: "We are patriots, ma'am, so you needn't be afraid to say you are a patriot."

"I'm glad of that," with a relieved air. "What are your names, and where do you live?"

Dick told her their names, and said that they were soldiers, belonging with a regiment of patriot soldiers that was in that part of the country, having come there recently from the North.

"Well, I'm glad there is a patriot army in this part of the country too," said the woman. "Maybe they will be able to put a stop to the plundering and burning of the homes of the patriot settlers around here."

"I think that we shall be able to do so," said Dick.

The food was on the table by this time, and the three youths needed no further invitation to move up their chairs and to eat heartily of the good things provided. The woman stood near, waiting on them, and talking eagerly. She asked many questions about the patriot army, and asked if the youths thought the patriot people of America would win their independence. And Dick told her he thought they would. "Washington is a great general," said Dick, "and I believe he will bring about the defeat of the British before many months have passed."

"I hope so," said the woman.

While the youths were eating, a pretty girl of perhaps seventeen or eighteen years entered the room, and she looked surprised when she saw the three strangers. The woman motioned to her to come nearer, and then she said to the youths: "This is my daughter, Sally Hart. Sally, these young men are Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster." She indicated each as she spoke their names, and the girl bowed to each, and the youths saluted in return.

"They are patriot soldiers, Sally," said the woman. "They belong with a patriot army that has just come down here from the North, and now Arnold and his redcoats will have to be careful or they will get into trouble."

"I am glad of that," said Sally, smiling. "And I am glad to make the acquaintance of you young men."

The youths assured her that the pleasure was mutual, and then she asked a few questions about the patriot army, after which she invited the three to spend the evening there and take part in the dancing.

"We shall be very glad to have you stay," she said. "Most all that are here are patriots, so they will be glad to make your acquaintance. Stay and dance, and later on we will have a big supper."

"I don't feel as if I would want any more food to-night," said Dick, smiling. "And indeed I feel almost too full to move. But perhaps a little later I shall be able to dance a little."

"Oh, you will be able to eat another supper by the time it is ready," said Sally, smiling.

"Well, perhaps so. Thank you for the kind invitation, Miss Hart."

"It will be a pleasure for us to have you spend the evening with us," said the girl. "When you are ready, we will go into the other room, and I will introduce you to the young folks."

The youths soon finished eating, and were ready to accompany the girl, and as soon as they were in the other room, where they were quickly the objects of surprised scrutiny from all present, Sally introduced them, and explained briefly how they happened to be present.

They were given a cordial welcome by the young people, the girls bowing to them, and the youths stepping up and shaking hands with them in a hearty manner.

Dick, Tom and Ben were feeling quite at home in a few minutes, and when the musician struck up a tune on his violin a few minutes later, they were ready to dance, having invited a partner from among their new friends. They were quickly out on the floor, taking part in the dancing.

Dick and Sally at the outset were partners. He found her a good dancer, and a pleasant companion as well. They talked and laughed as they whirled about the room, and were soon very well acquainted indeed.

The three patriot youths danced every set after that, and enjoyed themselves hugely, but when they had been there an hour or so, there came an interruption: The front door was suddenly thrown open and into the room strode ten British soldiers.

"What's going on here?" cried one, who wore the uniform of a sergeant. "You young people seem to be enjoying yourselves greatly, and that's a fact."

Dick, Tom and Ben were naturally somewhat dismayed, for they thought possibly the British soldiers had seen them as they were coming away from the vicinity of their encampment, and had

followed with the intention of capturing them.

As the redcoats did not take any particular notice of the three, however, they decided that they were mistaken in their supposition, and that the British soldiers had just happened in at the settlement, the same as had been the case with them. Dick, Tom and Ben had on citizen's clothing, so there was nothing to make the redcoats suspect them of being patriot soldiers. Doubtless the British intruders supposed the three to be residents of the settlement, the same as the other youths present. Having come to this conclusion the three patriot youths breathed more freely, and the feeling of dismay left them.

The soldiers insisted that they liked to dance, and so the music was started up again, and soon the dance was going merrily on, with the redcoats almost monopolizing the floor. The next set, however, only five of the redcoats danced, the others looking on, and Dick, who was dancing, saw one of the youths, Ralph Hicks, whisper something to the sergeant, after which the two left the room together. Dick's suspicions were aroused at once, for Sally had given Dick to understand that Hicks was her "fellow," as she put it. As Dick had danced with Sally several times, and had seen Hicks regarding him with a jealous frown on his face, the youth reached the conclusion that Hicks was going to tell the sergeant that there were three patriot soldiers in the house. Sally had stated that Hicks was the son of a loyalist, and this made Dick all the more suspicious. He would not stop dancing, however, for he thought it possible he might be mistaken in his suspicions, and he did not want to let the redcoats suspect that he feared capture.

He made up his mind to warn Tom and Ben, however, but just as the set was finished and Dick was leading his partner to a seat, Hicks and the sergeant reentered. The officer hastened to whisper something to each of the redcoats, and as Dick turned away, after seating his partner, he found himself confronted by the sergeant and another soldier, each with a pistol leveled at his head. A brief glance toward Tom and Ben showed Dick that they were threatened in the same manner.

"Surrender, you rebel!" cried the sergeant. "We arrest you, Dick Dare, in the name of the king!"

## CHAPTER XVI—The Bottle of Cider

The girls uttered cries of fear and ran into the other room. The young men stood their ground, but made no move to interfere. Doubtless they sympathized with the three youths--with the exception of Ralph Hicks--but did not feel like trying to fight ten British soldiers, for the sake of the three almost strangers.

Dick Dare realized that it would be foolish to try to resist or attempt an escape. The redcoats were within arm's-length of them, armed with pistols, and to try to get away would be to get bullets in their bodies before they were out of the room.

So he said: "We surrender. Don't shoot," and the sergeant nodded and said:

"That's sensible. Turn your backs to us and place your hands behind you."

The patriot youths obeyed, and the redcoats quickly bound their wrists with cord that was brought to them by Mr. Hart, the man of the house, at their command. It was easy to see that he did not like this, but the redcoats were strong enough so that they could do as they wished, and protest would avail nothing.

The three prisoners were placed in the kitchen, in one corner, and the sergeant confronted them, saying: "So you rebels are down here from the North with an army, are you?"

"Yes," replied Dick, quietly.

"What do you think you are going to do?"

"We are going to make it warm for Arnold and his troops," said Dick.

The sergeant smiled sarcastically. "I don't think *you* will have much to do with it," he said. "You are going with us to our camp, when we leave here, and to-morrow we will rejoin the main army, and Arnold will likely string you up to a tree, as I have heard him speak of you as being a rebel spy."

"You haven't got us to this encampment yet," said Dick, calmly.

"Bah. How came you to be here to-night?"

"That is our business."

"You won't answer, eh?"

"No."

"All right. It don't make any difference, anyway. We've got you, now, so you can't do whatever you had the intention of doing. I judge that likely you were searching for Arnold's encampment."

"Oh, possibly."

"Well, you won't have to search any longer. We'll see that you get there, to-morrow--and that you stay a while, my fine young rebel."

"Thanks," said Dick, sarcastically.

Then the sergeant placed a redcoat on guard, to see that the prisoners made no attempt to escape, after which he returned to the front room, and the dancing was started up again, and went on with seeming merriment. But the fact was, that the young people were not enjoying themselves as much as had been the case before the advent of the redcoats.

Sally Hart was a bright, shrewd girl. She had noted the fact that Ralph Hicks and the sergeant had left the room together a while before the three patriot youths were made prisoners, and she guessed that Hicks had told the sergeant that the three youths were patriot soldiers. She summoned Hicks to her side, and whispered to him that she wanted him to come out of doors with her, that she had something to say to him privately, and he followed her out.

When they were a short distance from the house, Sally turned and said, somewhat sternly: "Ralph, why did you tell that sergeant that the Dare Boys and Ben Foster were patriot soldiers, and cause them to be made prisoners?"

"I--why, Sally, I didn't--"

"Ralph Hicks, you know you did tell him!" interrupted Sally. "And, now, why did you do it?"

"Well, Sally," was the reply, in a desperate tone, "if you must know, I did it because you--because, well, you seemed to like Dick Dare, that's why. You danced with him four or five times, and I didn't get to dance with you once."

"So that is the reason!" There was anger and scorn in the girl's voice. "I danced with Dick Dare several times because he is a good dancer, and because he is a stranger, and our guest. And you had to go and get jealous and hand him over to the redcoats. Ralph Hicks, I have a good mind to never speak to you again!"

"I'm sorry, Sally," said Hicks. "I--well, I was kind of mad at Dick Dare, and--and, yes, jealous of him. I wish you were not angry with me, Sally."

"I am angry, Ralph," was the grim reply. "And there is just one way that you can get me over my angry feeling toward you."

"How is that, Sally?" eagerly.

"By securing the freedom of Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster."

Hicks was silent a few moments, and then said: "I can't do that, Sally. The redcoats have the three prisoners, and how could I get them out of their hands?"

"I don't know, that's your problem, but if you want me to ever speak to you, after to-night, you must get those three young men free. You were the cause of their being made prisoners, and it is your place to rescue them."

"But, how will I do it, Sally?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"If you will help me," said Hicks, presently, after a period of pondering, "perhaps I might manage it."

"What could I do?"

"I'll tell you. You have some mighty fine cider in the cellar, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll get a bottle of the cider, and will be out here with it, and you tell the soldier that is guarding the prisoners that if he will step out of doors, I will give him some cider. And when he comes out, you cut the ropes and free the prisoners, and they can rush out, knock the redcoat over and make their escape."

"But, won't the redcoat wonder why the cider isn't brought into the room and given to him there?"

"Tell him there is only one bottle, and that the other soldiers would want some of it, too, if they saw him drinking."

"Very well," said Sally, after a few moments of silence, "we will try that plan. Go down into the cellar and get a bottle of the cider."

"And--Sally."

"Well?"

"If we succeed in setting the prisoners free, you'll--you won't be angry with me, will you?"

"I'll see about it, Ralph. Now, go and get the cider."

Hicks said, "All right," and then lifted the cellar-door and made his way down into the cellar. He got a bottle of the cider, and when he got back up, and had closed the cellar-door, the redcoat was just emerging from the kitchen.

"Here," said Hicks, his voice trembling slightly. "Here is the cider."

"All right, young man, and thank you," said the redcoat. He stepped to Hicks' side, and took the bottle, and placed it to his mouth.

A few moments later the door of the kitchen opened again, and Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster leaped forth. The redcoat heard them and started to turn around, but Dick Dare, who was in the lead, sprang upon the British soldier with all his force, and the redcoat was hurled sprawling to the earth, the bottle flying from his hand.



The red coat was hurled sprawling.

Then the three youths dashed away, into the edge of the timber at the rear of the house.

The redcoat was not injured, excepting that he had been jarred by falling, and he scrambled to his feet, caught sight of the youths running, and jerking out a pistol, he fired a shot after the fugitives, and yelled loudly:

“Quick, comrades! The prisoners have escaped!”

## CHAPTER XVII—Arnold’s Encampment

The British soldiers came dashing through the kitchen and out by way of the rear door, and, directed by the excited redcoat that had permitted the prisoners to escape, through leaving his post, they dashed through the underbrush in pursuit of the three patriot soldiers.

On they ran, for quite a distance, but they did not catch sight of the fugitives, or hear any sound of them, so they presently, there being naught else to do, gave up the chase and made their way back to the house, where the young people, greatly excited, were eagerly awaiting their return.

When it was seen that the redcoats were returning empty-handed, there was great delight expressed by the young people, though in subdued tones, so that the redcoats could not hear what was said.

And Ralph Hicks, who had been responsible for the capture of the three patriot youths, was glad they had escaped, for he felt that if they had been recaptured, Sally would have kept her word, and never spoken to him again.

When all had entered the house, the sergeant began questioning the soldier that he had left to guard the prisoners, and the fellow said that the prisoners had somehow gotten their hands free, and had suddenly jumped up, knocked him down and had dashed out of the house. He had quickly gotten to his feet and followed them, had then fired the shot and yelled that the prisoners were escaping.

The sergeant looked puzzled, but did not say much. “I thought that you men could tie a prisoner’s hands so that he could not get free,” he growled. “That was a poor job you did, Simons.”

“I thought I tied their hands tight, sir,” was the reply.

“Oh, well, the rebels have made their escape, so there is no use worrying about it,” said the sergeant. “Let’s have another dance, and then we’ll return to camp and say nothing about it.”

They went back into the front room, the musician started a tune, and they were soon dancing with great enthusiasm. And after the dance was over, they and the young people went into the kitchen and ate heartily of the food that had been prepared.

All that the young folks regretted was that Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster, whom they had taken a liking to, were not there to help enjoy the supper, as they had expected would be the case.

As for the three in question, they had ran onward till they found that the redcoats had given up the chase, when they had turned around and made their way back to the house. And when the young people were eating, and at the same time wishing the patriot youths were there, the three were near enough so that while they could not look in through the window, they knew what was going on.

Dick, Tom and Ben would liked to have been in there, engaged in the same pleasing work, but fortunately they had eaten heartily that evening, after reaching the Hart home, and were not really hungry. So they simply watched and waited.

When the soldiers and the young folks had finished the repast, the redcoats took their departure, and soon after they had left the house, by way of the front door, Dick Dare opened the rear door, and called to Sally Hart, who came quickly, a delighted look on her face.

"I wanted to thank you for freeing us," said Dick. "It was very kind of you, and we appreciate it, I assure you."

"Oh, I was glad to set you free," said Sally. "I am a patriot girl, you know, and I didn't want the redcoats to take you to their camp, prisoners." And then she motioned toward the table, and said: "Come on in, and have something to eat. There is plenty of food left."

"Thanks, we will do so, Miss Sally," said Dick. "But, I will go and make sure that the redcoats have taken their departure. Tom, you and Ben can go on in. I'll be back in a few moments."

Tom and Ben entered the house, and Dick made his way around to the front, and after listening a few moments, heard the voices of the British soldiers, as they made their way through the woods, toward their encampment.

He followed a couple of hundred yards, and then, feeling sure that the redcoats would not return, he went back to the house and entered the kitchen, where Tom and Ben were already seated at the table, eating.

Dick took a place beside them, and Sally waited on the three, while the young folks stood around, asking questions about the manner in which the young patriot soldiers had escaped from their pursuers.

When the three had finished their supper, the young folks said they would be going home, and they shook hands with Dick, Tom and Ben and said good-night and went to their homes.

Mr. Hart invited the three patriot youths to spend the night there, and they accepted the invitation, though Dick said they would want to leave early in the morning, so as to get to the encampment of the party of British soldiers before they broke camp and started away, as it was his intention to follow them to the main encampment of the British.

"I'll get you up as early as you like," said Mr. Hart.

The youths were given blankets, and lay on the floor in the big front room, and slept soundly. They were up early, and found that Mrs. Hart and Sally had been up some time, and that they had breakfast on the table.

Dick told them that they need not have gone to this trouble, but they said it was a pleasure to them. The three youths ate heartily, and then said good-by. They took their departure, promising that they would call at the Hart home, if ever they were in the vicinity again.

They made their way to the vicinity of the British encampment, and found the redcoats just astir and that they were getting their breakfast.

"We are in plenty of time," said Dick. "We will stay here, where we can keep a good watch on them, and when they break camp and leave, we will follow them."

This they did, and about an hour later the redcoats broke camp and set out through the open country, going toward the east. The patriot youths followed, skirting the woods, and kept the redcoats in view, being careful, however, to keep out of sight themselves.

On marched the redcoats, and always on the trail the youths. They were feeling pretty well satisfied, for they believed they would soon discover the whereabouts of Arnold's encampment.

About the middle of the forenoon, the three reached the top of a high ridge, and on looking ahead, down the slope, they saw, about half a mile distant, in an open piece of ground of perhaps fifty or seventy-five acres, a good-sized encampment, which they did not doubt was the objective point of their search. The redcoats they had been following had just reached the camp, and had settled down as if intending to stay.

"That's Arnold's encampment, without doubt," said Dick. "Well, now we must get the information to Colonel Morris as soon as possible."

## CHAPTER XVIII—A Daring Attempt

The youths settled down and took it easy, while watching the encampment. They decided to wait till afternoon, before starting back to the patriot encampment, with the hope that Arnold might make a move, on learning from the soldiers that had just arrived that a patriot force had come down into that region from the North.

The result justified their judgment, for soon after noon the British soldiers began breaking camp, as if getting ready to march a considerable distance.

"Are they going to go toward our encampment, with the purpose of making an attack, or will they go in the other direction, I wonder?" questioned Tom.

"We will wait here and see," determined Dick.

"Somehow, I think they intend going in the other direction," asserted Ben.

Dick, however, shook his head. "I hardly think so," he said.

When the British force, which consisted of perhaps fifteen hundred men, got ready, it marched out of the encampment and came slowly up the slope toward where the three youths were concealed.

"They are going to march into the vicinity of our encampment," said Dick. "Well, that is all right. Colonel Morris won't have so far to go to get at them."

"True," said Ben.

"Come, boys," said Dick, a few moments later. "We must not let them see us."

The three set out down the slope toward the west, and during the afternoon they kept about a mile ahead of the redcoats, who advanced directly toward the point where the patriot army was encamped.

It was slow work for the British force to march along poorly conditioned roads, and they only got to the vicinity of the little settlement, where the dance had taken place the night before, at the hour it was time to go into camp.

Here they stopped and went into camp for the night, and Dick, Tom and Ben, being certain that the redcoats would be there till morning, made their way to the home of the Harts, where they were given a cordial welcome.

"You are back quickly," said Mr. Hart.

"Yes," replied Dick. "We are on our way back to the patriot encampment, and are keeping a little distance in front of the British force, which is marching toward the point where the patriots are encamped."

"Ah, so they are moving in that direction, are they?" exclaimed Mr. Hart.

"Yes, sir. They are encamped about a mile from here. They will be there till morning, and we thought we would come over here and see you folks."

"We are glad you did. Supper will be ready in a few minutes, and you will take supper and stay all night with us, the same as you did last night."

"If it won't inconvenience you too much," said Dick.

"We shall be glad to have you here," was the hearty reply, and Mrs. Hart and Sally said the same.

When supper was ready, the six sat up to the table and ate heartily, laughing and talking, and had just finished when there came the sound of knocking at the front door.

"Some of the redcoats have come here!" exclaimed Dick, in a low voice. "We will slip out at the back door, while you go to the front door to see them, Mr. Hart."

"Very well, but stay and come in as soon as they are gone."

"We will do so."

The three youths passed out through the rear exit, and Mr. Hart made his way to the front door, which, when he opened it, revealed to his view a couple of British officers.

"Good evening, sirs," said Mr. Hart, politely. "Will you come in?"

"Thank you, yes," replied one. And they entered, after which the officer who had spoken said: "I am General Arnold, of the king's troops, sir, and this gentleman is Colonel Riggs, of my staff."

"My name is Hart," was the reply. "I am glad to make your acquaintance."

Then the two seated themselves, and Mr. Hart did the same, after which General Arnold asked:

"I wish to inquire if there are many loyalists in this vicinity, Mr. Hart?"

"I think there are quite a good many, sir," was the reply.

"Do you think I could recruit my army here, to do much good?"

"You might secure a few members," was the reply.

"About how many, would you say?"

"Oh, perhaps fifteen or twenty, within a radius of five or six miles."

"That would not be very much of a reinforcement," said Arnold. "The country around here is not very thickly settled, then."

"Not very."

"There is quite a good-sized settlement about twelve or fifteen miles to the westward, is there not?" Arnold asked, after a few moments.

"Yes, sir."

"How big a settlement is it?"

"There are forty or fifty houses, sir."

"And there is another settlement near that one, made up mostly of rebels, is there not?"

"Yes, sir, so I have understood. It is not so large, however, having only twelve or fifteen families."

"Humph. Well, thank you, Mr. Hart. My army is encamped near here, and I thought we would walk over and have a talk with you, some of my soldiers having stated that they were here last night, at a dance."

"Yes, the young folks of the settlement had a little party here last night."

"My men informed me that Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster, three rebel spies, were here, and that they had them prisoners, but that they managed to escape," said Arnold.

"Yes, General Arnold. We did not know anything about them, of course, but as they appeared to be very nice young men, we gave them their supper, and they took part in the festivities."

"Oh, I am not blaming you, Mr. Hart. I was just wishing that the rebels had not escaped. I would have liked to have made them prisoners."

They talked a while longer, and then Arnold and his companion rose, said good-night and took their departure.

"That man is a rebel, Colonel Riggs," said Arnold, when they were a little distance from the house.

"I rather think so, myself," was the reply.

"Yes. He pretended that he was in sympathy with the king, but I am pretty sure that he is at heart a rebel."

"He did not seem to be very enthusiastic when you were asking about securing recruits in this region," said the colonel.

"No. I think he wished to discourage the idea."

"It looked that way to me."

Suddenly, when the two were about a quarter of a mile from the settlement, three forms leaped out behind them, from behind trees, and threw themselves upon the British officers. They were Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster, and they were attempting a most daring enterprise--the capture of General Arnold and Colonel Riggs.

Tom and Ben had seized the colonel, while Dick had leaped upon Arnold, and instantly a fierce struggle was taking place there in the underbrush.

## CHAPTER XIX—The Armies Close Together

The three patriot youths would have succeeded in effecting the capture of Arnold and the colonel, had it not been that four or five British soldiers happened to be coming along the path. They were not far distant, and were on their way to the Hart home to get some cider. Hearing the cries for assistance made by the British officers they ran in the direction from which the sound came.

The patriot youths heard the redcoats coming, and recognized that it would be impossible to make prisoners of the two officers, now that reinforcements were at hand, so Dick and his comrades let go of the two and ran away through the woods at the top of their speed.

The officers called loudly, but did not themselves go in pursuit. As soon however as the soldiers reached them, they indicated the direction taken by their assailants and the soldiers took up the chase.

"I would wager anything that those scoundrels that attacked us were the Dare Boys and Ben Foster," said Arnold, breathing hard. "They are just about daring enough to attempt such work as that."

"Likely you are right," agreed the colonel, who also was panting for breath.

"I hope that the men will capture them."

"Yes, but I have my doubts."

"So do I. The young rascals are fleet of foot and likely know the ground better than our men."

"Yes, and in the darkness and amid the trees it will be an easy matter for them to escape."

"I suppose so. Well, let us go on to the encampment."

They set out and were soon at the camp, where they sat down for a refreshing smoke, to await the return of the soldiers who had gone in pursuit of the three patriots.

An hour and a half passed, and then two of the soldiers arrived at camp, and reported that they had been unable to catch the rebels.

"I hardly expected you would," said Arnold, and then he dismissed them.

The other soldiers failing in their efforts to locate the boys had made their way to the Hart home, and were given several bottles of cider, which they drank, and then returned to camp.

They had scarcely gotten a hundred yards away from the house before Dick and Tom Dare and Ben Foster entered at the rear door.

The three were given a cordial greeting, and when they told how they had tried to capture Arnold and his companion, Mr. Hart laughed heartily.

"That was a daring attempt to make," he said.

"But we would have succeeded, if the soldiers had not come to the assistance of Arnold and the colonel," said Dick.

They talked there an hour or so, and then the members of the Hart family went to their rooms, while Dick, Tom and Ben slept on blankets spread on the floor, as they had done the night before.



Next morning they ate an early breakfast, after which they said good-by, and took their departure, going over to a point from which they could see the British encampment.

The soldiers were just beginning to cook breakfast, and the youths waited patiently till the redcoats had eaten. Then when they broke camp and started the day's march, the youths advanced also, keeping well ahead of the British.

An hour or so before noon the British had reached a point about three miles from the patriot settlement where the patriot army had its quarters, but instead of going in that direction, the redcoats bore away to the left and headed toward the Tory settlement three miles farther to the southward.

"They are going to the Tory settlement," said Dick. "Likely they will encamp there, and then will figure on engaging our army in battle."

"I guess that's about what they are going to do," said Tom.

"Well, as we are within about three miles of the patriot encampment, one of us had better go there with the news of the presence in this vicinity of the British army. Which of you will go?"

"I'll go," said Ben.

"Very well. Tell Colonel Morris that the British are evidently going to go into camp at the Tory settlement, and that as soon as we see that they have done so, we will bring him word."

"All right." And then Ben hastened away in the direction of the patriot encampment.

Dick and Tom made their way onward, following now instead of preceding the British, and remaining on their trail till they arrived at the settlement, where, as the youths had expected, the British stopped and went into camp.

"That means that they are going to stay there a while," said Dick. "So you go to the patriot encampment and tell Colonel Morris the news, Tom."

"All right. You will stay here?"

"Yes, till nightfall, and perhaps I may be able to secure some definite information regarding their intentions."

Tom then took his departure, and made his way toward the patriot settlement. He walked rapidly, and in less than an hour had arrived at his destination.

On entering the encampment, he asked where Colonel Morris had his quarters, and was directed to the Williams home, where he found the colonel, and also Captain Morgan, who greeted him pleasantly.

"You bring news of the British, my boy?" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir. They have reached the Tory settlement about three miles from here and have gone into camp."

"Then they are here for a campaign against us," said Captain Morgan.

"It would seem so," agreed the colonel. "Where is Dick Dare?" he asked, after a few moments.

"He stayed there, with the intention of waiting till after dark and trying to learn their plans."

"That is a good idea. How strong is their force, do you think?"

"About fifteen hundred, sir, I should judge."

"That is what Ben Foster said. Well, we have a thousand men, and will be able to give Arnold a good fight."

"Yes, I think we can hold our own against his force," said Captain Morgan.

After answering a few more questions, Tom made his way to the point where his company was quartered, and found Ben there. Herbert Miller, the school-teacher, was there also, and he informed Tom that he had joined the patriot army.

"Good for you. I'm glad of that," said Tom.

## CHAPTER XX—Dick And Hank Sprowl

Dick remained near the Tory settlement till nightfall, and then began to figure on entering and trying to learn something about the intentions of the enemy. The British force was encamped just at the edge of the settlement, and the youth believed he could visit one of the houses and perhaps learn something from the settler, without being seen by any of the redcoats.

So he made his way into the settlement, at the opposite side from the British encampment, and approaching one of the houses, knocked on the door.

The door opened, and a tall, rough-looking settler appeared. He was no other, in fact, than Hank Sprowl, Herbert Miller's worst enemy, but Dick, of course, did not know him.

"How are ye, stranger?" Sprowl said, gruffly. "What kin I do fur ye?"

"I am a stranger in these parts," replied Dick, "and I thought that perhaps I could get something to eat here. I will pay for the food."

"Thet's all right. Yas, I guess we kin let ye have somethin' to eat. Come in."

Dick entered, and Sprowl motioned to a chair after closing the door, and as the youth sat down, he asked: "What is your name, stranger?"

"Dick Ford," was the reply, Dick deciding that he had better give a fictitious name, he being so close to the British.

"Where do ye live, an' where ye goin'?"

"I live about a hundred miles north from here," was the reply. "And I'm going about fifty miles beyond the James River."

"Got folks down there, hey?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here's a stranger to supper, Molly," called Sprowl. "Cook enuff extra fur him."

"All right, Hank," was the response from the kitchen.

"I saw what looked like a big encampment at the edge of the settlement," said Dick. "What is going on? Are those men soldiers?"

"Yes, they're British soldiers. That is General Arnold's army," was the reply.

"Ah. I suppose they intend to fight the rebel army that I saw yesterday, fifteen or twenty miles from here, do they?"

"So ye seen ther rebels, did ye? Yes, thet's what Arnold intends to do. The rebel army is now at a rebel settlement about three miles from here, an' Arnold will git arter 'em pretty quick."

"When, to-morrow, do you think?" queried Dick.

Sprowl looked at the youth somewhat suspiciously. "W'y do ye wanter know?" he asked.

"Why, I thought that if there was likely to be a fight in this vicinity to-morrow, I would wait here and see it," was the prompt reply. "I would like to see a battle."

"Oh," said Hank. "So thet's your idee, hey? Wai, I don' know as he'll make an attack to-morrer, but he will git arter ther rebels before very long, thet's sartin."

"I've a good mind to stop here till the battle does take place," said Dick.

"Wai, I guess ye kin stay here ef ye want to," said Sprowl. "Ther battle may take place to-morrer."

An idea struck Dick, and he said: "As I said, I'm a stranger here, and wouldn't like to bother the British officers by asking questions, but you could find out whether they intend to make an attack to-morrow, or not, couldn't you, and if they do intend to do so, I will stay."

"Ye'll stay all night, anyhow, won't ye?"

"Yes, but I want to get up very early, and so if you will go and find out about that to-night, I will be much obliged. If they don't intend to make the attack to-morrow, or by the next day, I will go on my way."

"All right, I'll go over to ther encampment arter supper an' have a leetle talk with General Arnold, an' see if I can find out about ther battle."

"Very well, and thank you," said Dick. "I have always wanted to see a battle."

"Me, too," said Sprowl. "I never seen one, an' this will likely be a big one, fur Arnold has fifteen hundred men an' I hear thet ther rebels hev more than a thousand."

"That ought to make a lively fight," said Dick.

"Yas, thet's what I think."

Presently the evening repast was ready, and the three sat up to the table in the kitchen and ate supper. Dick was hungry, as a result of the walking he had done that day, and he ate heartily.

After the meal, Sprowl smoked a pipeful of tobacco, and then rose and stretched as he said: "I'll go over to ther British encampment, now, an' have a talk with General Arnold an' fin' out about ther battle, Dick Ford. I won't be gone very long."

"All right, Mr. Sprowl, and thank you for your kindness. I appreciate it, I assure you."

"Thet's all right. I kinder wanter know about ther battle, myself."

Then he left the house, and Dick, sitting there in the front room, congratulated himself on his good luck. He would now be able to secure information right from headquarters, and without having to venture near the British.

Sprowl was soon at the house where Arnold and his officers had taken up their quarters, and when he had been ushered into the room where the officers sat, talking, he explained his errand. He had already been spoken of by the settlers in the settlement as being one of the leading Tories, so Arnold was willing to discuss with him subjects of interest.

Sprowl, in the conversation, mentioned the fact that there was a young stranger at his house who had asked him to find out when the battle would likely take place, as if it would take place on the morrow, or next day, he would remain and see the affair, and Arnold started, looked thoughtfully at Sprowl for a few moments, and then said:

"You say there is a young stranger at your house now, and that he expressed a wish to know when the battle would likely take place?"

"Yas, General Arnold," was the reply.

"What is his name?" There was an eager light in Arnold's eyes.

Sprowl looked somewhat surprised, but answered "He said his name was Dick Ford."

Arnold started again, and smiled somewhat grimly. "Dick Ford, eh? What kind of looking young fellow is he? Describe him."

Sprowl did so as best he could, and Arnold nodded, and said: "I'll wager anything that the young fellow in question is the rebel spy, Dick Dare."

"Do you think so?" said one of the officers.

"I'm almost sure of it. And I'm going to know for sure. Colonel Riggs, get about a dozen men and we will go to Mr. Sprowl's home with him, surround the house, so that the young fellow cannot escape, and then we will enter and confront him. And if he is Dick Dare, as I feel confident is the case, I shall be very glad. I owe him a debt for trying to capture me up in New York City two or three months ago, and we both owe him something for trying to make prisoners of us last evening. Come, let us hasten, for he may take the alarm and take refuge in flight."

They went out, and Colonel Riggs ordered a squad of the soldiers to go with them to Sprowl's house, which they surrounded, and then Arnold and Riggs followed Sprowl into the house, where, sure enough, they saw Dick Dare sitting in the room, quietly awaiting the return of Sprowl.

Arnold and the colonel confronted the youth, and the general said, sarcastically: "So you wanted Mr. Sprowl to secure some information regarding my intentions, did you, Dick Dare? Very good. I have come to give you the information in person."

## CHAPTER XXI—Tom Reconnoiters

Herbert Miller left the patriot encampment about the middle of the afternoon, and went to the Santon home, where he was given a cordial greeting by Mr. and Mrs. Santon and Lizzie.

"You are not teaching school, now, Mr. Miller?" said Mr. Santon, with a smile.

"No," was the reply, "I guess that I won't teach any more for a while. I have joined the patriot army."

"I am glad to hear that."

"You will be safe from the hands of the Tories of the settlement, anyway," said Lizzie.

"Yes," said Miller, "but I don't believe you folks had better stay here. There will be a battle between the British and our army, possibly to-morrow, and it may take place right in this vicinity. So I have come to have you folks return with me to the patriot settlement, where you will be safe."

"Do you really think we would be in danger here?" asked Mrs. Santon.

"Yes I do," replied the young man. "When the battle begins, bullets will fly pretty thick, and as our army has two or three field-pieces, there may be a few cannon-balls flying through the air, and if the battle was to take place near here, the house might be riddled. You folks would doubtless be injured and would stand a chance, I fear, even to lose your lives."

"Then let us go to the settlement with Mr. Miller," said Mrs. Santon, who was of a somewhat nervous disposition.

"Very well," said Mr. Santon. And then they gathered together such of the household effects as they might require, and set out for the settlement.

The Santons had friends in the settlement, and were taken into the home of one of the residents. Herbert Miller was much better satisfied than he would have been had they remained in their home.

That evening and night passed quietly, but Dick Dare did not put in an appearance.

"I fear he has been captured," said Colonel Morris addressing the captain of Dick's company. The latter nodded, and said that it seemed probable that this was the case.

They were still talking about this matter, when the orderly announced Tom Dare, and a few moments later Tom was in the room.

"Well, my boy, what is it?" asked the colonel.

"I have come to ask what you think about Dick not having returned," said Tom.

"We were just discussing the matter," was the reply. "What do you think about it?"

"It looks as if Dick has been made a prisoner, sir," was the reply.

"That is what we thought."

"Yes, and I have come to ask if I may go and reconnoiter the British encampment. Perhaps I may be able to learn something."

"Yes, you may go. But be discreet, and don't yourself fall into their clutches."

"I will be careful, sir."

Then Tom saluted and withdrew, and was soon making his way through the forest in the direction of the Tory settlement and British encampment.

He passed the Santon home, and later on the schoolhouse where Herbert Miller had taught, and presently he came in sight of the settlement.

He paused and took a careful survey of the surroundings, and then, after a few moments he made his way around and approached the British encampment.

He moved forward till as close as he thought he dared venture, then he paused behind a big tree and began a careful study of the camp.

He could see the redcoats lolling about in the tents, but he did not see any signs of Dick, nor did he see any soldiers acting as if guarding any one of the tents, in which a prisoner might be placed. Tom was puzzled.

"I fear Dick is surely in there, a prisoner," he murmured. "Well, if he is, I can't rescue him. Now, what shall I do?"

He decided to stay around in the vicinity and keep watch on the encampment. The redcoats might make some kind of a move, and he could then carry the information to Colonel Morris.

It was slow work for Tom, who was of a lively, active disposition, but by leaving his post occasionally and taking a walk through the timber a distance of a mile or so, and then returning, he managed to stick to the work.

When noon came, he grew hungry, but had not thought to bring food with him, so he had to go without any. He stood it till about the middle of the afternoon, and then as everything was quiet in the camp, he decided to return to the patriot encampment and get something to eat, make his report to Colonel Morris, and then once more to resume his self-imposed task. He must determine what had become of his brother.

This he did, and when he had reported and had feasted to his heart's content, he fixed up a package of provisions and again set out. He told Miller and Ben Foster that he might remain away till morning. Ben wanted to accompany him, but Tom said he could reconnoiter better alone, and so Ben remained at the camp.

Tom was back in the vicinity of the British encampment in about an hour's time, and approaching cautiously, took up his position behind a tree and watched the redcoats.

Everything seemed quiet, and he decided that they did not intend making any move that day. After supper that evening, however, he noted that the soldiers began to move about energetically, that they were examining their muskets, and seemed to be getting ready for an enterprise of some kind.

"I believe that under cover of the night they are going to make an attack on the patriot army," was his thought. "If so, I must get there ahead of them and warn Colonel Morris."

Presently there could be no doubt that the British were going to make a move, and Tom waited eagerly till they left the camp and marched cautiously in the direction of the patriot encampment. Then he set out on the run in the same direction. He made a detour, however, to get around the British and he ran so swiftly that in about half an hour he was at camp headquarters, and promptly made his report.

"So the British are coming to attack us!" exclaimed the colonel. "Well, all right. We'll be ready for them." Then he gave instructions to the various officers, and soon the patriot soldiers were arranged in the best possible positions to repel the attack of the enemy.

Ten or fifteen minutes later the redcoats appeared, and came charging through the settlement, firing their muskets as they came.

Thanks to the warning they had received of the coming of the British, however, the patriots were not taken by surprise, and the former's fire was returned.

And then the crash of the musketry and the occasional roar of the cannon made a terrible din on the night air.

The battle between the British and the patriots was on.

## CHAPTER XXII—The Battle

It was a lively battle, indeed, for the British, being considerably stronger than the patriots, evidently thought they could defeat them, but the defenders were in a strategically good position. They sent back volley for volley, and had the advantage of the field-pieces, and so after a battle of about an hour and a half the redcoats retreated, carrying their dead and wounded with them.

The patriot loss was twelve killed and sixteen wounded, and they were pretty sure that the British had suffered a greater loss than this.

When the battle was over, it was found by the soldiers in Captain Morgan's company that Tom Dare was missing. At first it was feared that he had been killed, but his body was not found, and when the captain made inquiries of the youth's comrades, they said that they did not remember having seen him during the battle.

Ben Foster had not thought anything about this at the time, but now he remembered that Tom had not been by his side, and he could not think what had become of him.

Nor had Tim Murphy or Fritz Schmockenburg seen Tom, and they, like Ben, were uneasy regarding him.

There was only one possible solution, that Ben could think of, and that was, that Tom had slipped away and gone to the British encampment, in the hope that he might be able to rescue Dick, while the British were away.

The more Ben thought of this, the more certain he became that this was where Tom had gone, and he asked Captain Morgan to permit him to go to the British encampment and reconnoiter. He thought that if Tom had gone there, he might need assistance.

The captain consented that Ben should go, but urged due caution.

"I will exercise care, sir," was the reply.

Then Ben took his departure, and made his way in the direction of the enemy's camp. When he reached the vicinity of the old schoolhouse, where Herbert Miller had taught, he was surprised and attacked suddenly by about a dozen redcoats, who rushed out of the schoolhouse, and was made a prisoner.

He was ordered to enter the schoolhouse, where he found a number of British soldiers lying on blankets, many so severely wounded that it had been thought best to leave them there, fearing they could not be safely taken a further distance. The other soldiers, who had seized Ben, had been left there to take care of the wounded.

Ben was placed on a bench, his hands tied together behind his back, and one of the redcoats asked him who he was and where he was going.

"I live in this vicinity," said Ben. "I was on my way to the settlement."

The redcoat laughed sneeringly. "That will do to tell," he said. "But I don't believe you. You are a rebel and were on your way to spy on the British army."

"You are wrong," said Ben.

"I don't think so. I guess I shall have to take you to General Arnold."

Ben made no reply, and the redcoat, who wore a lieutenant's uniform, summoned a couple of soldiers, ordering them to take the prisoner to the British encampment, and to General Arnold.

"And don't let him escape on the way there," was the caution. "I am inclined to think he is a rebel spy."

"He won't get away," was the reply, and the two redcoats set out, with Ben walking between them.

At first they held to his arms, but when they had gone a little distance, they changed their positions, one walking in front and one behind Ben, and without holding to him.

Doubtless they thought that the prisoner would not think of trying to escape, with his hands bound. But Ben at once made up his mind to try to get away. He was an exceedingly swift runner, and he believed that even with his hands bound, he could outrun any redcoat, the majority of whom, in the lower ranks, were clumsy fellows. So watching till they came to a point where the ground sloped away, making it easy for speeding, Ben suddenly leaped backward against the soldier behind him, upsetting the fellow, who had not been expecting anything of this kind. Then Ben dashed away, down the slope at the top of his speed.

"After him!" yelled the redcoat who had been upset, as he scrambled hastily to his feet and drew a pistol. "Don't let him escape."

The other had heard his comrade give utterance to an exclamation as he went down, and had whirled just after Ben dashed away. Now he set out in pursuit, with the other redcoat eight or ten yards behind.

Down the slope Ben ran with great swiftness, when the fact is taken into consideration that his wrists were tied together behind his back, and he held his own against his pursuers. They were not able to gain on him.

On he ran, and when he had gone perhaps half a mile, he suddenly came to the edge of the high bank of a creek that probably emptied into the James River. It was at least thirty feet down to the water, and being unable to stop, Ben went over the edge of the bank. Down he shot, a distance of perhaps ten or twelve feet, where he struck on an outjutting ledge about four feet wide, and fell. Fortunately he rolled toward the face of the creek-bank, the ledge sloping downward, and kept on rolling till he was several feet inside a cave. And just then down came a great mass of earth and bushes, covering the ledge and choking up the entrance to the cave, shutting out the light and making it almost as dark as night within. Some heavy stones, with a great splash, fell into the water of the creek.

The redcoats had stopped before reaching the edge of the bank, and approaching cautiously to the point where the bank had caved off, looked down. They saw the great mass of earth extending from the ledge on down to the creek, and seeing nothing of Ben, one suggested that he had been buried under the miniature landslide, and was now smothered to death. But this idea was scouted as unlikely, rather it was thought that the runaway had fallen into the water and was drowned. They discussed the matter a few moments, the sound of their voices coming to Ben's hearing in faint murmurs, and then they turned and made their way back toward the schoolhouse, with the intention, doubtless, of reporting to the lieutenant.

Ben had kept quiet while the redcoats were talking about the affair, his thought being that he did not want to be recaptured, but when they had gone, he realized that he was imprisoned in a cave, with his hands bound, was practically helpless, and would likely have to remain there a prisoner and die of starvation and thirst. He shuddered, and a cold perspiration broke out over his body.

He wished, now, that he had called out to the redcoats. He would have been again made a prisoner, true, but he would have had the hope of getting away later on, while as the matter stood now, he did not see that he had any chance whatever to escape with his life.

Imprisoned in a cave, the entrance to which was covered several inches thick with earth, and with his arms bound, how could he hope to make his escape? A feeling of despair took hold of him.

## CHAPTER XXIII—Dick And Arnold

When Dick Dare was confronted by General Arnold and Colonel Riggs, in the Sprowl home, he realized that it would be useless to offer resistance. So he simply sat there quietly, and made no move toward trying to get away. He was chiding himself, however, for not having been more careful, and see to it that Sprowl did not bring some redcoats back with him.

"Good evening, General Arnold," said Dick, quietly. "I wasn't expecting you."

"I suppose not," sarcastically. "But I'm here. That was a very shrewd plan of yours, to get Sprowl to secure information for you, and it might have succeeded, had it not been that I became suspicious when he told me about you, and I jumped to the conclusion that likely you were Dick Dare, so came to investigate." Then he turned to Sprowl, who had entered with them, and said:

"Get a rope and bind his arms."

Sprowl went to the kitchen and came back with a piece of rope, and he quickly tied Dick's wrists together behind his back.

"Now, Dick Dare, you will answer a few questions, if you please," said Arnold.

"What are the questions?" the youth asked.

"First, how many men are there in the rebel force?"

Dick shook his head. "I won't answer that question," he said.

"You had better," threateningly.

"No."

"Remember, you are in my power, Dick Dare. You are a rebel spy, and also I owe you something for trying to capture me, in New York a few months ago and again last evening. Answer my question."

"I will not give you any information that might be of use to you in your campaign against the patriot force," said Dick, decidedly.

"You had better think well. I have the power to order you strung up to a tree as a rebel spy."

"That doesn't make any difference," was the reply. "I will give you no information, so there is no use of your asking."

Arnold glared at Dick angrily for a few moments, and then said: "Very well. Since you wish to be stubborn, you may take the consequences. I think I shall have you strung up, perhaps tomorrow, Richard Dare!"

Dick made no reply, and Arnold summoned a couple of soldiers. They entered, took charge of Dick, and conducted him to a cabin that was being used as a guard-house. They thrust Dick into the building and closed and fastened the door. The youth was left alone in the darkness to ponder his dubious situation.

He felt that his position was a desperate one, for he knew that Arnold bore him ill will for the part he had played in trying to effect the traitor's capture in New York; and, too, he was a spy, and death was usually the fate of spies.

Dick decided that he must manage to make his escape, but he felt that this would be extremely difficult, for there were soldiers on guard in front of the building, and his hands were still bound.

He worked at his bonds quite a while, however, in an effort to get his wrists free, but could not do so, Sprowl having tied the rope very securely. Finally Dick gave up the attempt, and felt around till he found a rude couch, upon which he threw himself, and presently went to sleep.

He did not sleep very soundly, but morning came at last, and a soldier brought him his breakfast. His wrists were freed while he ate, and he put in as much time at the meal as possible, so as to get the blood to circulating in his wrists and arms again. He wanted the soldier to let his arms remain free, but the fellow would not do it, and bound his wrists again.

Then he went out, closed and again fastened the door, and Dick sat down on the couch and tried to figure out some plan of escape, but without success.

That day passed slowly indeed for Dick Dare, but evening came at last, and while he was eating supper the redcoat informed him that an attack was to be made on the patriot force that evening.

"I wish I could be there to take part in it," said Dick.

"No doubt," was the reply. Then the soldier bound Dick's wrists again, and withdrew.

So the redcoats were going to make an attack that evening! Well, Dick hoped that the patriots would not be taken by surprise. He wished that he might be able to escape and carry them the news, but he could not.

He heard the sounds of stirring about by the redcoats, and knew when they marched out of the

settlement, and then he got up and walked the floor. He could not sit still, for the thought that perhaps the British might take the patriots by surprise was a disquieting one.

An hour passed, and then Dick guessed that the engagement was probably about to begin. And just then the faint sound of musketry and the occasional louder report of cannon came to his hearing, and then he knew the battle was on.

How he wished that he might be there! But the wish was vain. He could not escape from his quarters.

The firing continued for an hour, at least, and then suddenly, as Dick walked the floor, he saw one of the wide boards that constituted the floor of the building he was in, lift slowly, and at the opening thus made he saw his brother Tom!

"Sh!" whispered Tom. "I have come to rescue you, Dick."

## CHAPTER XXIV—The Rescue

"Good for you, Tom," replied Dick, cautiously. "See if you can get in here, and free my arms. Then I will be able to help myself. Wait. I can hold apart the boards with my feet." This he proceeded to do.

Tom crawled up through the opening and, drawing a knife from his pocket, cut the rope binding Dick's wrists. Dick stretched his arms, and then rubbed them vigorously to get the blood to circulating. While so engaged, he asked:

"Are there any soldiers on guard outside?"

"There's a couple around in front," replied Tom.

"Then we can slip out the other way, keeping the building between us and the guards."

"Yes. Their interest and intention is on the battle, the sounds of which you have heard, I guess."

"Yes. Did you take any part in the battle?" inquired Dick.

"No. As soon as the battle began I slipped away and came here, as I knew it would be a good time to try to rescue you, as there would be very few soldiers left here."

"Right. Well, let's get out of here quick, now."

"Come on. You are bigger than me, but I guess you can squeeze through this opening and crawl along under the floor. There isn't much room, however."

"Go ahead, Tom. I'll be right at your heels." Tom worked his way feet-first down through the opening, and then disappeared, and after him went Dick. As Tom had said, there wasn't much room under the floor, but Dick managed to work his way along and finally crawled out from underneath the floor, and rose to a standing posture, beside Tom.

"The guards are still around in front, discussing the battle," whispered Tom. "Let's make a dash for the woods."

"Wait a bit. One of them is coming. Give me one of your pistols."

This Tom did and the two crouched closely to the wall, ready to spring upon the guard immediately he should appear.

"He is only lighting his pipe," whispered Tom. "I hear him striking the flint."

"Then we can make a break for the woods. Run your fastest, Tom."

"All right."

Then they set out on the run, making as little noise as possible. They had traversed considerably more than half the distance to the edge of the forest, when one of the guards who had walked to the corner of the building, happened to glance in their direction, and caught sight of the two youths. He was suspicious at once that one of them might be his prisoner.

"See if the prisoner has escaped!" he cried to the other guard. "And be quick!"

Then finding that Dick was gone, both the guards came rushing around the corner of the building and started in pursuit of the fugitives.

"Stop!" yelled one. "Stop, or we'll fire!"

Of course, the patriot youths did not stop, or pay the least attention to the command. They kept right on running and were now at the line of the forest.

Into the woods Dick and Tom dashed just as the redcoats drew their pistols and fired at the fugitives. The bullets zipped into the tree trunks just back of them. Again the redcoats fired, with the same result.

"Now we are all right," said Dick. "They have only two pistols apiece, likely, and so will not be able to fire again, unless they stop and reload, in which case we would get so far away from them that they would never get within shooting distance again."

"That's so," said Tom.

Gradually they drew away from the pursuing redcoats, and finally the pursuers gave up the chase and turned back. As soon as they noted this, Dick and Tom slowed their pace to a walk and took it easy.

They continued onward till they came to the bank of a creek. The bank was high, and they noted that at the point where they stood, a portion of the bank seemed to have caved away recently. They glanced downward, and saw that several tons of earth had fallen into the creek at least thirty feet below, and at a point about ten or twelve feet down the face of the bank a ledge that projected three or four feet had caught and held a ton or so of earth.

It was now almost dark, however, and the youths, after resting a few moments, were about to turn and start for the patriot encampment when to their hearing came a muffled cry for help.

"Listen!" exclaimed Dick.

"Somebody cried 'help,'" said Tom.

"Yes, but where did the voice come from?"

"It sounded to me as if it came from below us, somewhere."

"That's the way it seemed to me."

Dick and Tom dropped down on their knees, and peered downward, and Dick called out, loudly:

"Hello, down there! Where are you?"

"In the cave," came back to their ears, in a muffled, faint voice. "In behind the earth that has closed up the entrance to the cave."

"Well, that is queer!" exclaimed Tom. "Somebody was in the cave when the bank caved off, and is a prisoner there."

"We must get him out, Tom."

"Yes, but how will we do it?"

"We must get down there on top of the ledge, and dig an opening."

"That's right. I guess we can get down there. Let's try it, anyhow."

They began making their way down the side of the creek-bank. It was now slightly sloping, and there were projections and indentations sufficient to give them foothold, and presently they stood on the top of the heap of earth that had lodged on the ledge. They looked to see if they could see any signs of the entrance, and near the top of the pile of dirt they found a small opening, which they judged was near the top wall of the cave itself. Dick placed his mouth close to the little opening and called out:

"Hello, in there. Are you all right?"

"Yes," was the reply. And then in an eager voice came the query: "Is that you, Dick?"

Dick uttered an exclamation of amazement. "Great Guns, Tom," he cried. "I believe that is Ben, in there!"

"What!" exclaimed Tom. "Why, I left him at the encampment."

"Is that you, Ben?" called Dick.

"Yes. How did you get here, Dick? I supposed you were a prisoner."

"I was, but Tom rescued me."

"Ah!" eagerly. "Is Tom with you?"

"Yes."

"Good! I was hunting him when I got into this predicament."

"We'll soon have you out of there, Ben. We'll dig from the outside, and you dig from the inside, and we'll soon have an opening big enough for you to crawl through."

"I can't dig, Dick. My hands are tied."

"What!" exclaimed Dick. "How did that happen?"

"I was captured by some redcoats, but managed to break away and took to my heels. They chased me, and I fell over the edge of the creek-bank, and landed on the ledge and rolled into the cave, and just then the bank caved off and the dirt closed up the opening. I was just wondering how I was ever to get out of here. I guess it is lucky for me that you boys happened along here."

"I judge you are right, for you could not have dug a hole through the dirt with your hands tied. Tom and I will soon have an opening though that you can crawl through, however."

"Good for you."

Dick and Tom went to work, digging, and in fifteen or twenty minutes had made a hole through which Ben managed to crawl, with their assistance. They cut the rope binding his arms, and then the three climbed up the bank, to the level ground, where they sat down to rest a few minutes, and Ben told his adventure in detail, and Tom and Dick each told of their experiences. A little later, all mightily happy, they were on their way again in the direction of the patriot encampment.

## CHAPTER XXV—Beating Arnold

"I wonder how the battle went?" said Dick, as they walked onward at a swift pace.



"We drove them away," said Ben. "I was there till the battle was over, and then, missing Tom, set out to find him."

"Oh, you didn't leave the encampment till after the battle, then."

"No. We got rather the better of the redcoats, I am certain. They lost a greater number killed, and a larger number were wounded, than of our men. And we forced them to retreat."

"That is good," said Dick.

"I wish I had been there to help fight the redcoats," said Tom.

"So do I," said Dick. And as the readers of the Dare Boys books will readily believe, this was true. But that they were to take part in many exciting battles before the end of the war will be seen, as the reader may if he wishes discover in the next volume of the series, which will be entitled, "The Dare Boys With General Greene."

"Was Tim or Fritz wounded?" asked Tom, anxiously.

"No," replied Ben. "They were not hurt."

Presently they reached the encampment, and were given a cordial welcome by their comrades, Tim, Fritz and Herbert Miller being delighted.

Dick went to the house occupied by Colonel Morris and the other officers and made a report, telling what he knew of the strength of the British force, and then went back and rejoined his comrades, and they sat around and talked of the battle for a while, after which they lay down and were soon asleep.

This first battle was the beginning of an exciting and vigorous campaign between Arnold's force of redcoats and Tories, and the patriot force under Colonel Morris.

Each force kept close watch on the other, and attempts were made to surprise each other and thus gain a victory, but in the three or four engagements that took place within the next few days neither side scored a victory, and the losses of men, killed and wounded, was about the same.

"We will get the better of Arnold yet, however," said Colonel Morris, determinedly, in council with his officers. "We will keep close watch on them, and presently we will get a chance to strike them a blow."

He kept Dick Dare pretty busy reconnoitering and spying on the British, and Tom and Ben assisted Dick quite a good deal in this work. Herbert Miller, too, was of considerable use, the four doing a lot of good work in the spying and reconnoitering line.

One evening, when Dick and Tom were watching the British encampment, they saw that the redcoats were breaking camp. They supposed that the British were going to advance against the patriot force again and make another attack, but waited to make sure of this, before carrying the news to Colonel Morris; but when the British were ready to march, they set out toward the east, instead of toward the patriot encampment, which lay to the northward.

"They are leaving this part of the country!" exclaimed Tom, excitedly. "They have gotten enough of fighting our force, and are marching away."

"I guess you are right, Tom," said Dick. "Well, you hasten to Colonel Morris with the information. I will follow the British and keep them under observation."

"All right, Dick." Then Tom hastened away, and Dick set out on the trail of the British. The redcoats marched perhaps ten or twelve miles, and then went into camp, and Dick, feeling sure that they would remain there till morning, made his way back till he met the patriot force advancing.

Colonel Morris was delighted when he learned that the British had stopped and gone into camp, and he decided to go forward and make an attack, taking the British by surprise, if possible.

Dick guided the patriot force, and a couple of hours later they were close to the encampment.

The patriots advanced slowly and cautiously, now, and succeeded in getting almost up to the sentinel line before they were discovered. Then at a command from Colonel Morris, they charged upon the British forces. As they did so, they opened fire from their muskets, and then were at close enough quarters to use their bayonets. There was a hot fight for a little while, and then the redcoats broke and fled in confusion, as the patriots fired a couple of pistol-volleys after the fleeing enemy.

This was a decided victory for the patriots, for they had killed a score at least of the British, had wounded thirty or forty, and had lost only six, killed, and had ten wounded.

This battle was effective in placing a check on the operations of Arnold in that part of Virginia. Colonel Morris kept after him, and in several engagements got the better of him, and Arnold's force was not able to do much damage, which was very satisfactory to the patriot settlers, who prior to the coming of the patriot force had been terrorized by Arnold's army. The plundering and burning of houses was stopped, and the patriot people rested in comparative peace.

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