

THE RIVALRY.

A Story of the Times of Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton.

BY JERE CLEMENS.

CHAPTER XII.

"It was a dreary mountain land, where lawless men a refuge found; And Murder, with his purple hand, Reigned sovereign o'er the bloody ground."

From the lines of Westchester Colonel Burr repaired to Newberg, where he remained for some time the honored guest of General McDougall. Oppressed by mental anxiety even more than by physical suffering, he lingered for weeks on the very verge of the grave. At last his temperate habits triumphed, and the healthy current began to creep slowly back to his shrunken veins. In the month of June the British, in large force, made threatening demonstrations against West Point, and General McDougall, justly alarmed for the safety of the place, sought by every means to open communications with General Washington; but this was a work of no ordinary difficulty for the British had so posted bodies of Tories on the roads and among the mountain passes as to render the destruction of any small party or the capture of a single messenger almost certain. General McDougall made repeated efforts to convey intelligence to the commander-in-chief, but all proved abortive. When these facts came to Colonel Burr's knowledge, feeble and emaciated as he was, he volunteered to undertake what so many had failed to accomplish. The general at first remonstrated, but finally yielded to Burr's urgent solicitations, and, giving him only verbal instructions, dispatched him on his journey. Well armed, and mounted on a good strong horse, he set out early in the morning on his dangerous mission. Toward nightfall, approaching one of the most difficult passes of the mountain, he observed a man step from the bushes and advance in advance of him and turn leisurely up the road, giving, apparently, little heed to the horseman whose presence he could not fail to be aware. He was dressed in the common garb of the country, and carried no visible weapon of any kind. Those were the words which Burr inwardly thought that if any one was justifiable in neglecting that precaution, it was the powerful figure before him. Not more than five feet six inches in height, his shoulders were of herculean breadth, and over his ample chest the bones were laid in thick curved plates that would have bid defiance to the hug of a Not over his right shoulder, as long as almost to deformity, and over it was twisted a net-work of muscles as hard and much more elastic than steel. The short space between the knee and the ankle-joint was almost entirely filled by the swelling calf; and the broad feet looked like pedestals to a mighty statue. He raised his head when Colonel Burr rode up alongside, and exhibited a countenance that would have been singularly pleasing but for the fierce light which flashed from his dark-hazel eyes.

"Good evening!" he said in a natural, unaffected tone. "Do you travel far on this road?"

"Perhaps so," was the reply. "Perhaps not."

"Why, eh? Shy and skittish! That looks bad."

"Why not? These are not times, nor is this the country in which a man can safely tell his secrets to every person he may chance to meet on the highway."

"Well, there is some truth in that; and it was none of my business, anyhow."

"But although thus disclaiming any interest in the motions of his companion, the sturdy footman kept within grasp of the bridle, and, as if unwilling to slacken his pace to suit the gait of the animal, Burr could not fail to notice that, move as he would, the relative distance between them was always the same. His quick eye, too, had detected the butt of a heavy pistol beneath the coarse frock-coat worn by the countryman, and he doubted not that other weapons were concealed by the same friendly cover. Believing from these indications that the purposes of his new acquaintance were no wise friendly, he thought it more advisable to bring on the struggle at once than to allow his adversary the selection of his own time and place.

"What is that?" he suddenly asked, pointed to a stunted beech-tree on the mountain side. The man turned his head for a moment, and only for a moment, but it was enough. The steed was reined sharply back, and snatched a pistol from his holster. Burr levelled it full at the head of his pertinacious companion, at the same time sternly demanding—

"Who are you? and for what are you dogging my steps?"

The pistol was double charged; it was held by a hand never known to tremble in the hour of danger; the least motion of his arm, the scraping even of a foot, and the giant pedestrian would have been hurled to the ground. His eye caught that of Burr as he leveled his own fierce gaze sank under the overwhelming power of that steady look which no living thing ever encountered unmoved. It was not anger that flashed from those large orbs, nor courage, nor determination merely, but all these combined; and added to them was a nameless spell which carried with it an irresistible conviction that whatever they were, they were to be performed. You felt that it was the glance of doom—that there were no chances to take, no wavering, no hesitation to hope for. You saw that the man's whole soul was aroused, that all his energies were alive and active, and you knew that it would be as safe to play with the lightning's forked dart. The bold strong animal quailed in the presence of a master-spirit, and in a tone resembling the whining growl of a chained and conquered bear, he answered—

"That is little to the purpose. Answer me truly, or by the Mother of God, your lease of life will be a short

wise to tempt him too far. Give me your arms; an angel from heaven could not make me hurt you now, and besides, according to your suspicions, it may be necessary to use them in your defense."

Colonel Burr promptly complied with his request, rightly judging that he had already trusted him too far to hesitate about any additional confidence. Durand moved the weapons in his belt, and again moved forward with a quick and nervous step. A few minutes brought them to a clearing on a level bench of the mountain, surrounded by a high, strong fence, in which were three or four cabins, irregularly placed and built to nearly alike. That it was difficult to decide which was designed for the use of man and which for the cattle and poultry that loved and cackled within. The owner of the premises who was engaged in the unmasculine task of milking a cow, had a villainous, bandit look, and the natural repulsiveness of his countenance was increased by an ugly scar, extending from above the left eye across the nose to the right cheek. He put down his milk-pail, and walked to the gate at the summons of Durand, slinking, as he did so, two fierce wolf-dogs, who were growling and barking furiously at the intruders.

"This, Bill, is my friend, Mr. Jones," said Durand, after shaking the outlaw by the hand. "He wants some supper and a night's lodging, and I have brought him here, knowing that you would give him a hearty welcome for my sake."

"Be sure!" answered Jenkins, extending his horny hand to Burr. "I'm glad to see you, sir, and though I haven't got much, you're welcome to what's here. Aleck," he continued, "take your friend into the house and build a fire. He looks sick and weakly, and these mountain dew is mighty chilly. I will take care of his horse."

"Rub him down well, Bill," replied Durand, "for he will have to travel hard in the morning. Take your time, I will get supper for you."

Jenkins led off the horse, and Durand entered the house followed by Burr. It was a square one-story log-cabin, covered with boards. Over the joists, for about one-half the length of the room, loose boards were laid, forming a kind of upper room, which was reached by a rough ladder, and was used as a general depository for any and every thing that the owner desired to put out of the way. The floor was made of split logs, and in the center of the room, a large cupboard, were a long rifle, a British musket, and three or four pistols of different size and make, showing that they were never intended to match, and indicating pretty plainly that the mode of their acquisition had not been entirely honest. In fact, they had been picked up here and there in the different forays of the present owner, and to some of the tales of murder, as well as robbery, attached. One chair and four or five stools were scattered about. In the center was a rude, square table. In one corner a rough bed, and in the other a pile of blankets, counterpane, and a miscellaneous collection of other bed-clothes, which never came there through fair traffic. By the door there was a shelf for a water-pail and near the chimney stood a large cupboard made of pine plank, and fastened by a wooden button. There was no window, and no other furniture. Durand had brought in a dry board, which he split to pieces over a large stone that did duty as an andiron, and, raking the embers together, soon succeeded in blowing them into a flame. While he was thus engaged, Colonel Burr had been noting everything in the house, and he now asked—

"Does your friend live here alone?"

"Not exactly. I am with him a good deal myself, but, if you mean to ask whether he has a family, I answer no. Men like us, have no use for women folk about the house. It is bad enough to be harried and burned out when we are alone, without being maddened by hearing the women screaming, and the children squalling besides."

"And now," answered Burr, "and there has been too much of that on both sides, in this unhappy war. God knows I tried to put a stop to it wherever I held command!"

"You did, sir; and you owe it to that that you are now safe and sound beneath an outlaw's roof, instead of being bound and bleeding in the hands of men who are deaf to the prayers of mercy. You thought you had me in your power, sir; and while we were upon the highway may be you did; but the moment you had passed Jordan's gate, nay, in the very act of getting from your horse, if your eye had turned from me one instant, you would have been lost. A blow given with half the strength of this arm would crush your ribs like rotten pipe-stems, and it is certain that I should have found some chance to deal that blow. It was your eye, sir, that saved you. I remembered that my desecrated pistol, and I knew you by that."

"I am thankful the trial was spared you; though I am not so certain that an unarmed man, could have made me a prisoner when fully armed and on my guard. We will let that pass, however, for the present, and, as I have been trusting you more than prudence dictates, while you have given me no information of your plans and intentions, you will excuse me by questioning you upon some things which it imports me much to know."

"Ask me nothing, if you please, sir," said Durand, interrupting him. "I know where you want to go, and I intend to conduct you there in safety or die in the attempt; but I shall be no more a friend to George Washington and his cause, when that is done, than I am now. At the same time I serve you for protecting my mother and her children. I remember that it was against your friends that protection was necessary, and I have no idea of sparing the whole brood of a wolf-bitch because I have found a noble hound among them. Do not ask me anything, therefore, and do not tell me anything. Draw that chair nearer to the fire; it is always cold up here at night. I must get about supper."

"The meal, and the manner of preparing it, was one for which Burr's experience, notwithstanding his military life, furnished no parallel. Taking down a small iron kettle, which was suspended from a cross-piece in the chimney, he filled it with water and hung it immediately over the blazing fire; then opening the cupboard, he took there

from the cold leg of a goat, which he cut into mince-meat; some slices from a side of bacon were added; two pods of red-pepper, and an onion chopped fine, some hard biscuit broken to pieces, and a handful of Irish potatoes, pressed and then stirred together, were stirred together, plentifully sprinkled with salt, and poured into the now boiling water.

By this time, Jenkins had returned. Producing a lamp, and drawing a stone Jug from underneath his bed, he invited his guests to partake of some "real old Jamaica"—an invitation to which Durand did double honor; and Colonel Burr, by his glass, swallowed a larger quantity of the potent spirit, according to his own acknowledgement, than he ever did at any other time in his life.

Those who know nothing of life, except what they have learned in peaceful times, and with carpeted floors beneath their feet, will find little in the foregoing description to please them, and will probably shudder at what is to follow. Three or four plates, rather than a larger quantity of the potent spirit, according to his own acknowledgement, than he ever did at any other time in his life.

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SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE REVOLUTION

How the Spirit of Liberty Was Kept Alive By an Unconquerable People.

By REV. ROBERT LATIHAN, D. D.

From the Yorkville Enquirer of 1876.

INSTALLMENT XVI.

General Preparations—Rocky Mount.

In order that we may have a clear and distinct knowledge of the subsequent movements of the contending powers, it is necessary that we have a correct and exact knowledge of the disposition of the British forces in South Carolina. When on the 5th of June, 1780, Sir Henry Clinton set out for New York, the command of the southern division of the British army in America, was entrusted to Lieutenant-General Earl Cornwallis. No better selection could have been made. Cornwallis was a soldier by choice and a soldier by profession. Brave, energetic and skillful, he entered upon the discharge of his duty as a soldier. In this particular instance, however, not because he thought it was right in the English government to subjugate the North American colonies, because as a soldier, he felt that his duty was to obey. The subaltern officers designed to assist in executing the task assigned to him, were generally, skillful leaders and some of them were dashing heroes.

To keep South Carolina and Georgia in subjection, and when the proper time arrived to subdue North Carolina, Sir Henry Clinton left Cornwallis six thousand and five hundred effective troops. These troops were British regulars, hired Hessians and loyalists from the colonies. This force to all human appearances, was more than sufficient. Both Georgia and South Carolina were lying prostrate, at least in appearance, at the feet of the British. Still it was the design of the British commander to augment his force by enrolling the loyalists scattered over the state.

So soon as the force was sufficiently strong, and the season of the year and the supplies of the country would warrant it, the commander contemplated marching into North Carolina and having reduced that state, then to continue his progress northward until a junction was formed with the northern division of his Majesty's forces. In vision, both Clinton and Cornwallis saw the American forces melting away and the British flag waving in triumph from the towers of Savannah. It was a grand and like most dreams, never realized.

To keep Georgia and South Carolina in subjection and be convenient at the proper time to advance northward, the following disposition was made of the British forces in the south: Savannah, the capital of Georgia was garrisoned by a corps of Hessians and loyalists. Under the command of Col. Alured Clarke, Augusta was entrusted to Col. Thomas Brown, a Tory. His forces consisted mostly of loyalists from the adjacent regions of South Carolina and Georgia. Lord Rawdon, with the twenty-third and thirty-third regiments of infantry, a legion of volunteers from Ireland, Brown and Hamilton's corps of loyalists and a detachment of artillery, was stationed at Camden. Major Mifflin, with the seven-hundredth regiment of regulars, was stationed at Cheraw; Lieutenant Colonel Balfour was placed in command of a garrison at Ninety-Six, and Lieutenant Colonel Turnbull was stationed at Rocky Mount, on the Catawba. Brigadier General Patterson, with three regiments of British regulars, two battalions of Hessians, a detachment of artillery and whatever number of loyalists he could gather up, was stationed at Charleston. At several other points, as necessity seemed to require, small detachments were stationed.

Taking everything in consideration, one would surmise that there was not even a possibility for South Carolina to make even an attempt to release themselves from the heel of the invader. As we have already seen, when Buford's command, on the 29th of May, 1780, was cut to pieces by Tarleton, the patriots had no armed forces left in the state. Instead of giving up in despair, those who could do so, left the state and began to prepare for renewing the conflict.

It has been customary to say that the approach of General Gates, at the head of a considerable number of Continental troops, infused life into the hearts of the Carolinians. This is not true. Sumter, Marion, Pickens, Clarke, Rutherford, Locke, Davis, Davidson and a multitude of others, were preparing to meet the British.

The progress of the enemy through the country was announced by refugees from Georgia and South Carolina to the Whigs in western Virginia. Campbell, Shelby, Sevier, McDowell and other patriotic spirits, determined to aid their kindred and their friends. The Whigs of the whole of upper South Carolina, northern Georgia and southwestern North Carolina, were concerting measures to drive the king's troops and the British from the shores of North Carolina.

After the defeat of Huck at Williamsburg on the 12th of July, 1780, those of the British and loyalists who escaped, made their way to Rocky Mount. The Whigs dispersed; some going home, and others joining Sumter at Clem's Branch. As is generally the case, victory had infused life and energy into the minds of the Whigs in all the region around Williamsburg. Sumter's army at Clem's Branch was a safe retreat and that Thomas Sumter was competent to lead a partisan corps to victory.

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