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HISTORICAL TALE.

EMILY GEIGER.

THE GALLANT COURIER.

Revolutionary Story Founded on Fact.

BY THOMAS S. ARTHUR.

Fort Motta, Fort Granby, Fort Watson, the Fort at Orangeburg, and every other post in South Carolina except Charleston and Ninety-Six, had yielded successively to the American arms, under the command of Greene, Sumter, Marion and Lee; and now General Greene turned all his energies to the reduction of Ninety-Six, giving orders at the same time, for General Sumter, to remain in the country South and West of the Congaree, so as to cut off all communication between Lord Rawdon, who was at Charleston waiting reinforcements from England, and Colonel Cruger, who was in command at Ninety-Six.

Day after day the siege of Ninety-Six went on, the Americans slowly approaching the fort by a series of works constructed under the superintendence of Kosciuszko, and Cruger still holding out in expectation of reinforcements from Charleston, although a single word of intelligence Lord Rawdon had reached him since the investment of the post, which had held out with so much bravery and perseverance.

On the 2nd of June, the long expected reinforcements from England reached Lord Rawdon, and on the 3rd he started for the relief of Col. Cruger, with a portion of three Irish regiments, and was joined soon after by South Carolina royalists, swelling his force to two thousand men. But his efforts to transmit intelligence to Lord Rawdon were frustrated by the vigilance of the American pickets.

On the 11th of June, General Greene received intelligence from General Sumter of the approach of Lord Rawdon. Directing Sumter to keep in front of the enemy, he reinforced him with all his cavalry under Lieutenant-Colonel Washington, and urged him to use every means in his power to delay the advancing British army, until he should be able to complete the investment of the fort of Ninety-Six, and compel it to surrender. Then with renewed diligence he pressed the siege, hoping to obtain a capitulation before Col. Cruger should receive news of the approaching succor, and thus break up with the exception of Charleston, the last rallying point of the enemy in South Carolina. But the commander of the fort was over on the alert to make good his defences and to annoy and retard the besiegers in every possible way; and, though ignorant of the near approach of aid, he would listen to no overtures for a capitulation.

One evening, while affairs retained this aspect, a countryman rode along the American lines, conversing familiarly with the officers and soldiers on duty. No particular notice was taken of this, as from the beginning of the siege, the friends of our cause were permitted to enter the camp and go wherever their curiosity happened to lead them. The individual here mentioned moved along, seemingly much interested with all he had seen and heard, until he arrived at the great road leading directly to the town, in which quarter were only some batteries thrown up for the protection of the guards. Pausing here for a few moments, he glanced cautiously around him, and then, suddenly putting spurs to his horse, he dashed at full speed into the town. Seeing this, the guard and sentinels opened their fire upon him; he escaped unhurt, holding up a letter as soon as he was out of danger. The garison, which had observed this movement, understood its meaning, and the gates were instantly thrown open to receive the messenger, who proved to be from Lord Rawdon, and brought the welcome intelligence of his near approach.

Hoping still to reduce the fort before the arrival of Lord Rawdon, General Greene urged on the work of investment, and by every means in his power sought to weaken the garison so as to make victory certain

when all was ready for the final assault. But before he had accomplished his task, a messenger from Sumter arrived with the unwelcome intelligence that Rawdon had succeeded in passing him and was pushing on rapidly for Ninety-Six. The crisis had now come. Greene must either hazard an assault upon the fort ere his works were in complete readiness to risk a battle with Rawdon, or retire over the Saluda and thus give confidence and strength to the Tory and royalist army. His first determination was to meet the relieving army under Rawdon, but every thing depending on his not giving the enemy, at this particular crisis of affairs in the South, a victory, and seeing that his force was much inferior to that of the British, he resolved to make an attempt upon the fort, and if not successful in reducing it, to retire with his army towards North Carolina before Rawdon came up.

The 18th of June, 1781, was the day chosen for this assault. But made, as it was, with the besiegers' works incomplete, though the men fought with desperate courage, the fort was successfully defended, and General Greene ordered his troops to retire, after they had suffered the loss of one hundred and eighty-five killed and wounded.

Nothing was now left but retreat. For some twenty-six days the besieging army had been at work before the fort, and in three days more, all their arrangements would have been completed and the post fallen into their hands. It was therefore deeply mortifying and dispiriting to be forced to retire, just as success was about crowning their efforts. But far seeing, prudent, and looking more to future results than present triumphs, Greene on the 19th commenced his retreat towards the Saluda, which river he passed in safety, and moved forward with all possible despatch for the Enoree. Before his rear guard left the south of this river, the van of Lord Rawdon's appeared in pursuit. But the British commander hesitated to make an attack upon Greene's cavalry, which was under the command of Lee and Col. Washington, and was a brave, well disciplined and superior troop, and so permitted them to pass the Enoree unmolested. While Lord Rawdon paused at this point, undetermined which course to pursue, General Greene moved on towards the Broad river, where he halted and made his encampment.

Such was the aspect of affairs at the time our story begins—a story of woman's self devotion and heroism. Near the place where Gen. Greene had halted with his weary and disheartened troops, stood the unpretending residence of a country farmer, in moderate circumstances. His name was Geiger. He was a true friend of the American cause, and but for ill health, that rendered him unable to endure the fatigues of the camp, would have been under arms in defence of his country. The deep interest felt in the cause of liberty by Geiger, made him ever on the alert for information touching the progress of affairs in his State, and the freedom with which he expressed his opinions created him hosts of enemies among the evil-minded Tories with whom he was surrounded. Geiger had an only daughter, eighteen years of age, who was imbued with her father's spirit.

"If I were only a man!" she would often say, when intelligence came of British or Tory outrages, or when news was brought of some reverse to the American arms. "If I were only a man, that I could fight for my country!" On the third day of Gen. Greene's encampment near the residence of Geiger, a neighbor dropped in. "What news?" asked the farmer. "Lord Rawdon has determined to abandon the fort at Ninety-Six." "Are you certain?" "Yes, General Greene received the information this morning. Rawdon has deputed intelligence to Col. Stuart to advance with his regiment from Charleston to Friday's Ferry on the Congaree, where he will join him immediately. He leaves Cruger at Ninety-Six, who is to move as soon as possible, with his bloody Tory recruits and their property, and take a route that will put the distance between him and our forces. Moving down the southern bank of this river

to Orangeburg, he will thence make a junction with Rawdon at Friday's Ferry. "Then they will divide their force!" said Geiger, eagerly. "Yes. And give Greene advantage by which he will not be slow to profit, Cruger will not be a day on the march before our General will make his acquaintance."

"No," replied the neighbor. "If I heard aright, it is Gen. Greene's intention to pursue Rawdon, and strike a more decisive blow. "Why did he not encounter him at the Saluda, when the opportunity offered?" "Gen. Sumter was not with him?" "Nor, is he now." "And, I fear, will not join him, as he so much desires?" "For what reasons?" inquired Geiger. "He finds no one willing to become bearer of despatches. The country between this and Sumter's station on the Wateree, is full of the enemies of our cause. Blood-thirsty Tories, elated by the defeat of our arms at Ninety-Six, who will to a certainty murder any man who undertakes the journey. I would not go on the mission for my weight in gold."

"And can no man be found to risk his life for his country, even so perilous a service?" said the farmer, in a tone of surprise, not unmingled with mortification. "None. The effort to reach Sumter would be fruitless. The bravest man will hesitate to throw his life away."

"God protects those who devote themselves to the good of their country," said Geiger. "If I could bear the fatigue of the journey, I would not shrink from the service."

"You would commit an act folly." "No—of true devotion to my country," replied the farmer, warmly. "But," he added, in a saddened voice, "what boots it that I am, willing for the task. These feeble limbs refuse to bear me on the journey."

Emily Geiger, the daughter, heard all this with feelings of intense interest; and as she had often said before, so she said now, in the silence of her spirit: "Oh, that I were a man! But she was simply a young and tender girl, and her patriotic heart could only throbb with noble feelings while her hands were not able to strike a blow for her country."

"If I were only a man!" murmured the young girl and again, as she mused on what she had heard, long after the neighbor had departed. In the meantime, Gen. Greene, who had heard through messengers from Col. Lee of the proposed abandonment of Ninety-Six, and the division of the British and Tory forces, was making preparations to retrace his steps, and strike, if possible, a decisive blow against Rawdon. In order to make certain of victory, it was necessary to inform Sumter of his designs, and effect a junction with him before attacking the enemy. But, thus far, no one offered to perform the dangerous service.

On the morning of the day upon which the army was to commence retracing its steps, Gen. Greene sat in his tent lost in deep thought. Since taking command of the Southern army, he had been struggling at every disadvantage with a powerful enemy, whose disciplined troops were daily strengthened by citizens of the country, lost to every feeling of true patriotism; and now, having weakened that enemy, he felt eager to strike a blow that would destroy him. But, with the force that he could command, it was yet a doubtful question whether an engagement would result in victory to the American arms. If he could effect a junction with Sumter before Lord Rawdon reached Friday's Ferry on the Congaree, he had great hopes of success. But the great difficulty was to get a messenger to Sumter, who was distant between one and two hundred miles. While the General was pondering these things, an officer entered and said—

"A young country girl is before the tent, and wishes to speak with you."

"Tell her to come in," replied the General. The officer withdrew, and in a few moments re-appeared in company with a young girl, dressed in a

closely fitting habit, carrying a small whip in her hand. She courtesied respectfully, as she entered. The General arose as the maiden stepped inside of his tent, and returned her salutation. "General Greene?" inquired the fair stranger. The officer bowed.

"I have been told," said the visitor, the color deepening in her face, that you are in want of a bearer of despatches to Gen. Sumter. "I am," replied the General. "But I find no one courageous enough to undertake the perilous mission!" "Send me," said the maiden. And she drew her slight form upward proudly.

"Send you?" exclaimed the General, taken by surprise. "You? Oh, no, child! I could not do that. It is a journey from which brave men hold back."

"I am not a brave man. I am only a woman. But I will go." Touched by such an unlocked-for incident, Gen. Greene, after pausing for some moments, said— "Will you go on this journey alone?" "Give me a fleet horse, and I will bear your message safely."

"Alone?" "Alone." "What is your name?" inquired the officer, after another thoughtful pause. "Emily Geiger." "Is your father living?" "Yes." "Have you his consent?" "He knows nothing of my intention. But he loves his country, and but for ill health, would have been bearing arms against the enemies. His heart is with the good cause. I trust his arm is not weak."

His heart might fail him were I to ask his consent. But it is not for you, General, to hesitate. Heaven has sent you a messenger, and you dare not refuse to accept the proffered service when so much is at stake." "Noble girl!" said the General, with emotion. "You shall go. And may God speed you and protect you on your journey!" "He will!" murmured the intrepid girl, in a low voice.

"Order a swift, but well-trained and gentle horse to be saddled immediately," said Greene to the officer who had conducted the maiden into his presence. The officer retired, and Emily seated herself while the General wrote a hasty despatch for Sumter. This, after it was completed, he read over to her twice, in order that, if compelled to destroy it, she might yet deliver the message verbally, and then asked her to repeat him its contents. She did so accurately. He then gave her minute directions in regard to the journey, with instructions how to act in case she was intercepted by the soldiers of Lord Rawdon, to all of which she listened with deep attention.

"And now, my good girl," said the General, with an emotion that he could not conceal, as he handed her the despatch, "I commit to your care this important message. Everything depends on its safe delivery. Here is money for your expenses on the journey," and he reached her a purse. But Emily drew back saying— "I have money in my pocket. Keep what you have. You will need it and more for your country."

At the point the officer re-entered the tent, and announced that the horse was ready. "And so am I," said Emily, as she stepped out into the open air. Already a whisper of what was going on in the General's quarters had passed through the camp, and men had gathered before his tent to see the noble-minded girl as she came forth to start upon her dangerous journey.

There was no sign of fear about the fair young maiden, as she placed her foot in the hand of an officer and sprang upon the saddle. Her face was calm, her eyes slightly elevated, and her lips gently compressed with regulation. Gen. Greene stood near her. He extended his hand as she had firmly seated herself and grasped the reins of the noble animal which she was mounted.

"God speed you on your journey and may heaven and your country reward you," said he, as he held her

hand tightly. Then, as if impelled by a sudden emotion, he pressed the fair hand to his lips, and turning away, sought the seclusion of his tent, deeply moved by so unexpected and touching an instance of heroism in one who was little more than a child. As he did so, the officer, who had until now held the horse by the bridle, released his grasp, and Emily, touching the rein, spoke to the animal upon which she was mounted. Obeying the word instantly, he sprang away, bearing the fair young courier from the camp, and moved rapidly in a south-westerly direction. Officers and men gazed after her, but no wild shout of admiration went up to the skies. On some minds pressed painfully, thoughts of the peril that lay in the path of the brave girl; others, rebuked by her noble self devotion, retired to their tents and refrained from communion with their fellows on the subject that engrossed every thought, while others lost all present enthusiasm in their anxiety for the success of the mission.

About five miles from the encampment of Gen. Greene, lived one of the most active and bitter Tories in all South Carolina. His name was Loire. He was ever on the alert for information and had risked much in his efforts to give intelligence to the enemy. Two of his sons were under arms at Ninety-Six, on the British side, and he had himself served in the encampment of Gen. Sumter in his neighborhood. Loire was only in communication with those who were kept hovering in his vicinity, in order to pick up information that might be of importance to the British.

Emily Geiger had started on her journey, one of Loire's spies reached the house of his employer. "What news?" asked the Tory, who saw, by the man's countenance, that he had something of importance to communicate. "The rebel Greene has found a messenger to carry his despatch to Sumter."

"Are you sure?" "Yes, and she has been on her journey some four or five hours."

"She? That girl of Geiger's went to the camp this morning and volunteered for the service?" "The———" But we will not stain our pages with a record of the profane and brutal words that fell from the lips of the Tory.

"She has the swiftest horse in the camp," said the man, "and unless instant pursuit is given she will soon be out of our reach. With a bitter oath Loire swore that she should never reach the camp of Sumter."

"Take Vulcan," said he, in a quick, energetic voice, "and lift him but when you overtake the huzzy, between this and Morgan's Range."

"She has nearly five hours' start," replied the man. "But you must make two miles to her one."

"Even then she will be most likely ahead of the Range, ere I can reach there."

"Very well. In that case you must start Bill Mink after her, with a fresh horse. I will give you a letter, which you will place in his hands should you fail to overtake the girl."

With these instructions, the man started in pursuit. He was mounted on a large, strong horse, who bore his rider as lightly as if he had been a child. In the meantime, Emily, who had received minute information in regard to her journey, and who was, moreover, no stranger to the way, having been twice to Camden, struck boldly into the dense forest through which she was to pass, and moved along a bridle track at as swift a pace as the animal she rode could bear without too much fatigue. The importance of the work upon which she had entered, and the enthusiasm with which it inspired her, kept her heart above the influence of fear. No event of moment happened to her during the first day of her journey. In passing a small settlement known as Morgan's Range, which she did at about four o'clock in the afternoon, she took the precaution to sweep round it in a wide circle, as some of the most active and evil

minded Tories in the State resided in that neighborhood. Successful in making this circuit, she resumed the road upon which her course lay, urging forward her faithful animal which though much fatigued, by the rapidity of his journey, obeyed the word of his rider as if he comprehended the importance of the message she bore.

Gradually, now, the sun declined, and, as the deep shadows mingled green and micro with each other, a feeling of loneliness, not before experienced, came over the mind of Emily, and her eyes very cast about more warily, as if she feared the approach of danger. The house at which she had proposed to spend the night was still ten miles, if not more, in advance, and as the shades of evening began to gather around, the hope of reaching this resting place was abandoned; for there being no moon, there was danger of her losing her way in the darkness. This conviction was so strong, that Emily turned her horse's head in the direction of the first farm house that came in view after the sun had fallen below the horizon. As she rode up to the door, she was met by a man, who, accosting her kindly, asked where she was from and how far she was going.

"I hoped to reach Blwoods to night," replied Emily. "How far away is it?" "Over ten miles—and the road is bad and lonely," said the man, whose wife had by this time joined him. "You had better get down and stay with us till morning."

"If you will give me that privilege," returned the maiden, "I shall feel greatly obliged."

The man promptly offered his hand, and she dismounted, and stepped down to enter the house. "Have you come far?" enquired the woman, as she united Emily's bonnet strings, looking very earnestly in her face as she spoke.

Emily knew not whether she were among the friends or enemies of the American cause, and her answer was, therefore, brief and evasive. "Your horse looked very tired. You must have ridden him a long distance."

"I rode fast," said Emily. "But still, I have not been able to reach the place for which I started this morning."

"It is hardly safe for a young girl like you to take such a long journey alone, in these troublesome times."

"I'm not afraid. No one will harm me," said Emily, forcing a smile.

"I'm not so certain of that, child. It's only a day or two since Greene passed here in full retreat, and no doubt, there are many straggling vagabonds from his army roaming around, whom it would not be safe for one like you to meet."

As the woman said this, a chill went over the frame of the young girl, for in the tone of her voice and expression of her face, she read an unfeignedness to the cause that was so dear to her heart. She did not venture a reply.

"Might I ask your name?" said the woman, breaking in upon the anxious thoughts that were beginning to pass through her mind.

Emily reflected hurriedly before replying, and then answered, "Geiger."

The quick conclusion to which she came was, that in all probability the woman did not know anything about her father, as favoring the Whig cause; but even if she did, a suspicion of the errand upon which she was going was not likely to cross either her own mind or that of her husband.

"Not John Geiger's daughter?" exclaimed the woman. Emily forced an indifferent smile, and replied, "Yes."

"I have heard of him often enough as a bitter enemy to the royalist. Is it possible you have ridden all the way from home to day?"

Before Emily replied, the husband of the woman came in. "Would you think it," said the latter, "this is John Geiger's daughter, of whom we have so often heard?"

"Indeed! Well, if she were the daughter she should have food and shelter to night. No wonder your horse is tired," he added, addressing

Emily, "if you have ridden from home to day. And, no doubt, you are yourself hungry, as well as tired, so, wife, if it is all ready, suppose we have supper."

The movement of the supper table, gave Emily time for reflection and self-possession. No more pointed questions were asked her during the meal, and after it was completed, she said to the woman that she felt much fatigued, and if she would permit her to do so, she would retire for the night.

The young girl's reflections were by no means pleasant when alone. She thought seriously of the position in which she was placed. Her father was known as an active Whig, and she was in the house of a Tory, who might suspect her errand and prevent its consummation. After retiring to bed, she mused for a long time as to the course to be taken, in case efforts were made to detain her, when, overwearied nature, claiming its due repose, locked all her senses in sleep.

Nearly two hours after Emily had gone to her chamber, and just as the man and woman who had given her shelter for the night, were about retiring, the sound of a horse's feet were heard rapidly approaching the house. On going to the door a young man rode up and called out in a familiar way—

"Hallo, Preston! Have you seen anything of a stray young girl in these parts?"

"Bill Mink!" returned the farmer. "What in the world brings you here at this time of night?"

"On a fool's errand, it may be," returned the man, "but I received a letter from Loire, an old enemy, stating that Greene had sent a messenger to carry intelligence to Sumter, and that I must overhail her at the risk of every thing."

"It is not possible!" said the wife of the man called Preston. "It is though; and it strikes me that she must be a confounded clever girl!"

"It strikes me so too," returned Preston. "But, I rather think your errand will be that of a fool if you go any further to night."

"Have you seen anything of the clever rascal?" asked Mink in a decided tone. "Well, perhaps I have," returned Preston, lowering his voice. "Aha! ejaculated Mink, throwing himself from his horse. 'So I have got on the right track. She is here!' 'I did not say so.' 'No matter. It is all the same,' and hitheling his horse to the fence, the young man entered the house with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

The sound of the horse's feet, as Mink came dashing up to the house, awakened Emily. The room she occupied being on the ground floor, and the window raised to admit the cool air, she heard every word that passed. It may well be supposed that her heart sunk in her bosom. For a long time after the newcomers entered, she heard the murmur of voices.

Then some one went out, and the old horse was led away to the stable. It was clear that the individual in search of her, had concluded to pass the night there, and secure her in the morning.

The intrepid girl now bent all her thoughts on the possibility of making an escape. An hour she lay, with her heart almost fluttering in her bosom, listening intently to every sound that was made by those who were around her. At length all became still.—Preston and his wife, as well as the new comer, had retired to rest, and the heavy slumber into which both the men had fallen, was soon made apparent by their heavy breathing.

Noislessly leaving her bed, Emily put on her clothes in haste, and pushed aside the curtain that had been drawn before the window. Through the distant tree-tops she saw the nearly risen moon shining feebly. As she stood leaning out of the window, listening eagerly and debating the question whether she should venture forth in the silent midnight, a large house dog, who was on the watch while his master slept, came up, and laying his great head on the window sill, looked into her face. Emily

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