

HORSE-SHOE ROBINSON

A TALE OF THE TORY ASCENDENCY

BY
JOHN P. KENNEDY

CHAPTER XX.

"What ho! What ho!—thy door undo:
Art watching or asleep?"
—Burger's Leonora.

On the banks of Enoree, in a little nook of meadow, formed by the bend of the stream which, fringed with willows, swept round it almost in a semicircle, the inland border of the meadow being defined by a gently rising wall of hills covered with wood, was seated within a few paces of the water, a neat little cottage with a group of out-buildings, presenting all the conveniences of a comfortable farm. The dwelling-house itself was shaded by a cluster of trees which had been spared from the native frost, and within view were several fields of cultivated ground neatly inclosed with fences. A little lower down the stream and within a short distance of the house, partially concealed by the bank, stood a small low-browed mill, built of wood. It was near sundown, and the golden light of evening sparkled upon the shower which fell from the leaky race that conducted the water to the head gate, and no less glittered on the spray that was dashed from the large and slowly revolving wheel. The steady rush of the stream, and the monotonous clack of the machinery, aided by the occasional discordant scream of a flock of geese that frequented the border of the race, and by the gambols of a few children, who played about the confines of the mill, excited pleasant thoughts of rural business and domestic content. A rudely constructed wagon, to which were harnessed two lean horses, stood at the door of the mill, and two men, one of them advanced in years, and the other apparently just beyond the verge of boyhood, were occupied in heaping upon it a heavy load of bags of meal. The whitened habiliments of these men showed them to be the proper attendants of the place and now engaged in their avocation. A military guard stood by the wagon, and as soon as it was filled, they were seen to put the horses in motion and to retire by a road that crossed the stream and take the descending direction of the current close along the opposite bank.

When this party had disappeared, the old man directed the mill to be stopped. The gates were let down, the machinery unengaged, and in a few moments, all was still. The millers now retired to the little habitation hard by.

"There is so much work lost," said the elder to his companion, as they approached the gate that opened into the curtilage of the dwelling. "We shall never be paid for that load. Colonel Innis does care much out of whose pocket he feeds his men; and as to his orders upon Raydon's quarter-master, why it is almost the price of blood to venture so far from home to ask for payment—to say nothing of the risk of finding the army purse as low as a poor miller's at home. I begrudge the grain, Christopher, and the work that grinds it; but there is no disputing with these whiskered foot-pads with bayonets in their hands—they must have it and will have it—and there's an end of it."

"Are," replied the man addressed by the name of Christopher, "as you say, they will have it; and if they are told that a poor man's sweat has been mixed with their bread, they talk to us about the cause—the cause—the cause. I am tired of this everlasting preaching about king and country. I don't know but if I had my own way I'd take the country against the king and day. What does George the Third care for us, with a great world of water between?"

"Whist, Christopher Shaw—whist, boy! We have no opinions of our own; trees and walls have ears at this time. It isn't for us to be bringing blood and burning under our roof, by setting up for men who have opinions. No, no. Wait patiently; and perhaps, Christopher, it will not be long before this gay bird Cornwallis will be plucked of his feathers. The man is on his way now that, by the help of the Lord, may bring down as proud a hawk as ever flew across

the water. If it should be otherwise, trust to the power above the might of armies, and wiser than the cunning of men, that, by a righteous and peaceful life, we shall make our lot an easier one than it may ever be in mingling in the strife of the evil-minded."

"It is hard, for all that—wise as it is—to be still," said Christopher, "with one's arms dangling themselves for battle. It will come to that at last; fight we must. And, I don't care who knows it, I am for independence, uncle Allen."

"Your passion, boy, and warmth of temper, I doubt, outrun your discretion," said the old man. "But you speak bravely and I cannot chide you for it. For the present, at least, be temperate, and, if you can, silent. It is but unprofitable talk for persons in our condition."

The uncle and nephew now entered the house, and Allen Musgrove—for this was the person to whom I have introduced my reader—was soon seated at his family board, invoking a blessing upon his evening meal, and dispensing the cares of a quiet and peaceful household.

"I wonder Mary stays so long with her aunt," he said, as the early hour of repose drew nigh. "It is an ill place for her, wife, and not apt to please the girl with anything she may find there. Wat Adair is an irregular man, and savage as the beasts he hunts. His associates are not of the best, and but little suited to Mary's quiet temper."

The wife, a staid, motherly-looking woman of plain and placid exterior, who was busily engaged amongst a thousand scraps of coarse, homespun cloth, which she was fashioning into a garment for some of the younger members of her family, paused from her work, upon this appeal to her, and directing her glances above her spectacles to her husband, replied:

"Mary has been taught to perform her duties to her kinsfolk, and it isn't often that she counts whether it is pleasant to her or not. Besides, Wat, rough as he is, loves our girl, and love goes a great way to make us bear and forbear both, husband. I'll warrant our daughter comes home when she thinks it right. But it is a weary way to ride over a wild country, and more so now when Wat and Tory have distracted the land. I wish Christopher could be snared to go for her."

"He shall go to-morrow, wife," returned Allen Musgrove. "Wat Adair, love her or not, is not the man to go out of his way for a wandering girl, and would think nothing to see the child set out by herself. But come, it is Saturday night and near bedtime. Put aside your work, wife; a lesson from the Book of Truth, and prayers, and then to rest," he said, as he took down a family Bible from a shelf and spread it before him.

The old man put on a pair of glasses, which, by a spring, sustained themselves upon his nose, and with an audible and solemn voice he read a portion of scripture; then, placing himself on his knees, whilst the whole family followed his example, he poured forth a fervent and heart-inspired prayer. It was a simple and homely effusion, delivered from the suggestions of the moment, in accordance with a devout habit of thanksgiving and supplication to which he had long been accustomed. He was a Presbyterian, and had witnessed, with many a pang, the profligate contempt and even savage persecution with which his sect had been visited by many of the Tory leaders—especially by the loyalist partisan, Captain Huck, who had been recently killed in an incursion of Sumpter's at Williams's plantation, not far distant from Musgrove's present residence. It was this unsparing hostility towards his religion, and imputed derision of it, that, more than any other circumstance, had begotten that secret dislike of the Tory cause which, it was known to a few, the miller entertained, although his age, situation, and, perhaps, some ancient prejudice of descent (for he was the son of an early Scotch emigrant), would rather have inclined him to take the royal side; that side which, in common be-

lieve, thou hast best thy bow," he said, in the warmest effusion of his prayer. "And shot thine arrows, O Lord, amongst this people; thou hast permitted the ministers of vengeance, and the seekers of blood to ride amongst us, and thy wrath hath not yet bowed the stubborn spirit of sin—but the hard hearts are given strong arms, and with curse they have smitten the people. Yet even the firebrand that did please thee not to stay because of our sins—yea, even the firebrand that did cause conflagration along our border, until by the light the erring children of men might read in the dark night, from one end of our boudry even unto the other, the enormity of their own backslidings, and their forgetfulness of thee; that firebrand hath been thrown into the blaze which it had itself kindled, and like a weapon of war which hath grown dull in the work of destruction, hath been cast into the place of unprofitable lumber, and hath been utterly consumed. The persecutor of the righteous and the scoffer of the word hath paid the price of blood, and hath fallen into the snares wherewith he lay in wait to ensnare the feet of the unthinking. But stay now, O Lord of Hosts, the hand of the destroyer, and let the angel of peace again spread his wing over our racked and wearied land. Take from the wicked heart his sword and shield, and make the righteous man safe beside his family hearth. Shelter the head of the wanderer, and guide in safety the hunted fugitive who flees before the man of wrath; comfort the captive in his captivity, and make all hearts in this rent and sundered province to know and bless thy mercies for ever more. In especial, we beseech thee to give the victory to him that hath right, and to establish the foundations of the government in justice and truth, giving liberty of conscience and liberty of law to those who know how to use it." At this point the worship of the evening was arrested by a slight knocking at the door.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed the old man, starting from his kneeling position. "Who raps at my door?"

"Friend or foe?" asked Allen Musgrove. "A very worthless friend to any man at this present speaking," replied the person on the outside of the door; "and not fit to be counted a foe until he has had something to eat. If you be Allen Musgrove, open your door."

"Are you alone, or do you come with followers at your heels? My house is small and can give scant comfort to many."

"Faith, it is more than I know," responded the other; "but if I have followers it is not with my will that they shall cross your door-sill. If you be Allen Musgrove, or if you be not, open, friend, I am as harmless as a barndoor fowl."

"I do not fear you, sir," said Musgrove, opening the door; "you are welcome to all I can give you, whatever colors you serve."

"Then give us your hand," said Horse Shoe Robinson, striding into the apartment. "You are a stranger to me, but if you are Allen Musgrove, the miller, that I have heard men speak of, you are not the person to turn your back on a fellow creature in distress. Your servant, mistress," he added, bowing to the dame. "For riding and fast riding gives a sort of claim these times; so excuse me for sitting down."

"You are welcome, again; your name, sir?" said Musgrove. "Have I guessed yours?" inquired Horse Shoe.

"You have."

"Then you must guess mine; for it isn't convenient to tell it." "Some poor Whig soldier," said Christopher Shaw privately to Musgrove. "It isn't right to make him betray himself. You are hungry, friend," added Christopher; "and we will first get you something to eat, and then you may talk all the better for it."

"That's a good word," said Horse Shoe, "and a brave word, as things go; for it isn't every man has the courage to feed an enemy in these days, though I made the devils do it for me this morning. Ha, ha, ha! Some water, Mr. Musgrove, and it will not come badly to my hand if you can tangle it somewhat."

The refreshment asked for was produced by Christopher Shaw; and Horse Shoe, taking the brimming cup in his hand, stood up and with a rather awkward courtesy, pledged the draught with "Your health, good

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miss, and luck to the little ones! for we grown-up babies are out of the days of luck, except the luck of escaping twisted hemp, or drum-head law, which for tonight, I believe, is mine; and he swallowed the mixture at a draught; then, with a long sigh, placed the cup upon the table and resumed his seat. "That there spirit, Mr. Musgrove," he added, "is a special good friend in need, preach against it who will!"

"You say you have ridden for today," remarked the miller; "you must be tired."

"I am not apt to get tired," replied the sergeant, turning his sword-belt over his head, and flinging the weapon upon a bench; "but I am often hungry."

"My wife," said Musgrove, smiling, "has taken that hint before you spoke it; she has already ordered something for you to eat."

"That's an excellent woman!" exclaimed Horse Shoe. "You see, Allen Musgrove, I don't stand much upon making myself free of your house. I have heard of you often before I saw you, man; and I know all about you. You are obliged to keep fair weather with these Tories—who have no consideration for decent, orderly people—but your heart is with the boys that go for liberty. You see I know you, and am not afraid to trust you. Perchance, you might have heard tell of one Horse Shoe Robinson who lived over here at the Waxhaws?"

"I have heard many stories about that man," replied the miller. "Well, I won't tell you that he is in your house tonight, for fear the Tories might take you to account for harboring such a never-do-well. But you have got a poor fellow under your roof that has had a hard run to get here."

"In my house!" exclaimed Musgrove; "Horse Shoe Robinson!" and then, after a pause, he continued, "well, well, there is no rule of war that justifies a Christian in refusing aid and comfort to a houseless and hunted stranger who comes with no thought of harm to a peaceful family hearth. I take no part in the war on either side; and, in your ear, friend Robinson, I take none against you or the brave men that stand by you."

"Your hand again," said Horse Shoe, reaching towards the miller. "Allen, I have come to you under a sore press of heels. An officer of the Continental army and me have been traveling through these here parts, and we have been most onaccountably ambushed by a half wild-cat, half bull-dog, known by the name of Captain Hugh Habershaw, who coteched us in the 'light at Grindall's ford.'"

"Heaven have mercy on the man who has anything to do with Hugh Habershaw!" exclaimed the miller's wife.

"Amen, mistress," responded the sergeant; "for a surlier, misbegotten piece of flesh, there's not in these wild woods, giving you the choice of bear, panther, catamount, rattlesnake, or what not. We were set upon," continued the sergeant, "by this bully and a bevy of his braggadocios, and made prisoners; but I took a chance to slip the noose this morning, and after riding plump into a hornet's nest at Blackstock's, where I met on a new face and tricked the guard out of a dinner and this here old sword. I took a course for this mill, asking people along the road where I should find Allen Musgrove; and so, after making some roundabouts and dodging into the woods until night came

on, to keep clear of the Tories, here I am."

"And the officer?" said Musgrove. "He is in the hands of the Philistines yet—most likely now at Blackstock's."

"What might his name be?"
(CONTINUED NEXT FRIDAY.)

Ghosts at Hampton Court.
Whether a policeman saw a number of phantoms at Hampton Court recently or not, the famous pile cannot be deprived of its ghosts. There are at least three of them. There is that of Jane Seymour, one of the wives of Henry VIII., which is said to have been seen wandering about the building with a lighted taper in her hand. The ghost of Mrs. Sibell Penn, who died in 1562, is asserted to have been noticed several times since the year 1829, when, in pulling down the old church, her tomb was disturbed. Then there is what is called the shrieking ghost of Queen Catharine Howard, which haunts a gallery near the Queen's great staircase.—St. James' Gazette.

A River That Eats Between Meals.
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A novel capture of an escaped jail breaker was made early the other day on the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad near Milton when Chief of Police Mincemoyer of Danville, leaning far out from a speeding locomotive, seized Charles Sutton by the collar and swung him on board a prisoner, says a Wilkesbarre (Pa.) correspondent of the New York Sun. Sutton had broken out of the Montour county jail several hours before, and, believing that he would try to escape along the railroad, Sheriff Williams and Chief Mincemoyer got a locomotive and started in pursuit. While running about twenty miles an hour they saw in the glare of the headlight Sutton leaning against a box car on a siding to let the locomotive pass him. He was unresponsive of such speedy pursuit and did not realize his danger until Mincemoyer's strong arm shot out and seized him.

Search For a Polar Island.
One of the objects of an expedition which the Duke of Orleans will make into the polar regions early in June is to seek an island which he believes exists in the sea of Kara.

Winthrop College.
Scholarship and Entrance Examination.
The examination for the award of vacant Scholarships in Winthrop College and for the admission of new students will be held at the County Court House on Friday, July 5th at 9 a.m. Applicants must not be less than fifteen years of age. When scholarships are vacated after July 5, they will be awarded to those making the highest average at this examination, provided they meet the conditions governing the award. Applicants for Scholarships should write to President Johnson before the examination for Scholarship examination blanks.
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