

PETER BACOT'S DEVICE.

A TRUE STORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

By Everett T. Tomlinson.

The battle of Camden had been fought on August 16, 1780, and among the prisoners taken by the British in that engagement were Captain Peter Bacot, John Starke, a young man of 19, and an old continental from Connecticut, Simon Jones by name. The three men were marching in a band of thirty, who, three days after the battle, were being forwarded by Colonel Rawdon to Charleston, and when they thought of the dungeon awaiting them their hearts were heavy, for the stories of the sufferings and deaths in the loathsome place were current among the whigs of South Carolina.

The band of prisoners had just entered upon a lonely road which led through a forest, and grateful for the cooling shade on that hot day guards and prisoners alike halted for a rest.

Young John Starke, who had been wounded in the thigh and had pluckily continued on the march for fear of worse evil if he fell out of the ranks, turned and looked upon the men in the company, and the sight was not one to cheer him. Some of the prisoners were true-hearted men, but many were horse thieves, who had refused to give the British the opportunity of leaving their plunder for a trifle, and as a consequence had been numbered among the transgressors. Outlaws and desperate characters were there, and along with the prisoners of war were all consigned to the Charleston dungeons.

Nor did a glance at the hand of red-rotten fate, or the feelings of John, for many of them were notorious Tories and desperadoes, and he knew that they would not hesitate at anything to obey the orders they had received. Truly his situation was a desperate one, and with a heavy heart he said to Captain Peter: "Not very much hope here, captain."

"No," replied Peter Bacot briefly. "It's Rawdon's way, I guess," drawled the Yankee Simon. "He's grown tired of hanging and shooting helpless men, and he thinks by sending 'em in to the Charleston dungeon he'll do just as well and save himself all the trouble. It'll be the same thing in the end."

"They say there is lots of smallpox among the Charleston prisoners," said John. "And they say truly," replied Peter. "They don't half feed the men and with the smallpox and fever and foul air they don't have to look after any of the men very long."

"It saves time and money and guards, I guess," drawled Simon again. "I don't mind seeing 'em economical. It's what I was brought up to be myself."

John looked quickly at the old soldier, but his face was expressionless. He could not tell whether his indifference was real or assumed, but whatever the cause John had little sympathy with it. For himself he was afraid, and the prospect of entering the dungeon at Charleston was almost more than he could bear. Already he could see in his mind the sight of the pale, suffering men confined there, and all the stories he had heard of the fates of those who had come back to him. He could not repress a shudder as he turned again to Captain Peter and said: "Is there no hope? Can't we make a break and get out of this? We'd better be shot than die the death we'll have to at Charleston." His companion made no reply, except to glance expressively at the guard, and John, too, was silent as he observed the men. What a desperate band they were! The hardened faces and brutal looks were on every side of him. Surely, no mercy was to be expected from them, and the young soldier groaned as he realized his helplessness, but it was not the pain from the wound in his thigh that caused the expression.

lain Faust appeared in the doorway, and in a thick voice ordered the men to form and advance.

"It was no good," said John, despondingly. "You can't tell yet," replied Peter. "Here comes your sister."

"John," said Nancy, as she approached, "I've done all I could and will hope for the best. Here, take these, quick," she added as she drew three black bottles from the folds of her dress and handed them to her brother. "Be careful. Maybe you can work your plan yet. Goodby," she whispered, as she turned and left them.

John thrust one of the bottles into his pocket and gave his companions the others, and then they arose to take their places in the ranks. The march was at once resumed, but the lines of the guard were very uneven now, and the murmurs had given place to shouts and songs.

"Steady, steady!" called out Captain Faust as he looked back at the men. "He thinks the troubles are with them," said Simon. "He'll have to look out for the ground will hit him in the face. It's all right, and we'll make a try pretty quick."

"Hark! What's that?" inquired John, sharply. The sound of the bugle could be heard in advance of them. The three prisoners

looked at one another in dismay, for doubtless the approaching men were red coats, and their coming meant the downfall of all their hopes. Dismayed as they were, they would have laughed at another time at the expression upon the face of the drunken captain, Faust. He too, had heard the sound and realized that he was in no fit condition to be seen by any of his superior officers.

"Here, Captain Faust," said Peter Bacot, quickly, "you take my hat and coat and give me yours and your sword and I'll help you out. Be quick; you haven't a minute to lose!"

"Glad to—have you," said the leader, thickly, at once carrying out the suggestion. The transfer had hardly been made and the men formed in line by the roadside before Colonel Cruger's band of red coats, escorting supplies and reinforcements for the upper stations, appeared in the road.

"Present arms!" called Captain Peter, and the men, who were stupid to perceive the change in officers, obeyed, and also carried out the order to salute the newcomers. "Who's in command of these men and what are they?" inquired Colonel Cruger, as he drew rein on his horse.

completed their work, had paroled the Tories and disappeared.

And what became of them? John Starke concealed himself in the woods, and was fed and cared for by Nancy, till he was strong enough to make his way to Sumter's army. Captain Peter Bacot became an officer in the regulars of South Carolina, but of Simon no word was ever received.

After the war, when John Starke used to relate the story for his grandchildren, he would close by saying: "It's the only time in all my recollection I can remember that drunken men ever did any good."

SILENT FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. The Story of John Crane Who Spoke to No One.

John Crane, 47 years old, who had never spoken to a living soul since he was fifteen years of age, died last week at his Naugatuck (Conn.) almshouse and when his ragged clothing was ripped apart \$5,000 in large bills were discovered in the lining. Crane came to Naugatuck in 1855. He had just come out of the army and was popular in the community. He was thrifty and old citizens remember him as an energetic, to-do young man. He worked in a local factory and in ten years accumulated a handsome bank account.

It was in 1873 that he began paying his addresses to Mary Robbins. The acquaintance lasted many months and Crane, notwithstanding Miss Robbins' indifference, pressed his suit persistently. One day she gave her final answer.

His fellow workmen at the factory noted Crane's deep melancholy. None were able to cheer him, few to elicit a word from the disappointed man. He left his bench and disappeared. He took up his residence in a solitary hut a few miles from Naugatuck. His house lay in a thick wood far from the roadside and he became a hermit and miser. He refused to speak with even those few with whom he came in contact. In all the years of his solitude no one ever heard his voice. His neighbors, after a few years, forgot the story of his life and thought him a mute.

As early as 1884 Crane began depositing money in the Naugatuck Savings bank. Compound interest on a dollar he deposited in October of that year amounted at the time of his death to \$25 cents. Every month he would emerge from his hermitage, visit the bank, make a sign for his bank book, examine it without a word and depart. A year and a half ago Crane, much emaciated and quite feeble, was brought to the Naugatuck almshouse. The matron knew nothing of the man's history nor of his money.

His health grew gradually worse. Through all his pain he never loosened his tongue and to the end he maintained his self-composed silence. A few days ago Crane sent for the matron, Mrs. Blumaire, and signified that he wished to write out something which seemed to weigh on his mind. He always postponed the communication, hesitating and throwing the paper aside at the last moment. On the evening of the day when Crane knew that his hours were few, he sent for the matron. He made a sign to the messenger to bring a pencil and paper. Before Mrs. Blumaire reached his cot Crane was dead and sealed the lips for all time which disappointment had made dumb enough life. Some of the bills found in the clothing of the dead man were issued during the civil war. Four hundred dollars had been sewed up in wrappings of paper and old handkerchiefs. In his waistcoat pocket were two \$5 bills, the only note.

The Land of the Lazy. "In a late sojourn in Honduras," said Mr. L. B. Givens to the Washington Post, "I came to the conclusion that it was a paradise for lazy men. Everything grows luxuriantly with but little labor on the part of the natives, and many crops do not need planting more than the seed. The country offers fine inducements to enterprising men, but it is hard on a white man used to civilized ways to go down there and dwell among an ignorant lot of natives who are 100 years behind the times. A man would have no congenial society, and might as well be in exile. The natives usually live in bamboo houses, though in the towns the dwellings are of adobe. Children go naked for the first two or three years of their life, and the attire of the adults is rather scant. The government is liberal with concessions in order to encourage development of the country's resources, but there is no general rule governing the granting of privileges; it all depends on how good a bargain may be driven. The climate is very salubrious, and laziness is about the only prevailing disease."

WHAT WAR MEANS. Loss to the Wealth of the World in the Blood and Ashes of Battle.

What has actually been lost to the wealth of the world in the blood and ashes of the war since authentic history began is beyond all estimate. It has been computed that the loss of human life alone in that time from war amounts to fourteen thousand million souls—a number equivalent to the entire population of the globe for the last 330 years, says a writer in Leslie's Weekly. It should be noted here that the class of men who are drafted or are accepted for military service are invariably the very class who, by reason of age, health and strength, are the most valuable to the world from the purely economic and material standpoint. They are the stalwart, intelligent, capable men. In this country economists have set the definite value of \$5,000 upon the average man, considered as a wealth producer. Taking this figure as the general standard of the value of man, it can be seen that an inconceivable amount of wealth in the shape of men has been destroyed on the battlefields of the world since time began.

The material losses of the United States have not been as great, comparatively, as those of other civilized nations in recent times, but even the totals here are sufficient to show the absurdity of the supposition that either now or at any other time we may reap financial gain by the sickle of battle. The material losses of the United States during the war of the revolution was \$20,000,000 in specie. Most of this money was raised by public loans in the form of paper currency. The diminishing value of this slender security inevitably brought about the hoarding of gold. The consequence was that the money market was so tight that it followed by suffering widespread and intense.

Our second war with England lasted only two years, but it cost us \$72,000,000 to vindicate our cause, just and righteous as it was. And this did not include the losses to the American citizenry from the privations, suffering, loss beyond computation, even in those times of our comparative commercial poverty.

For the folly of the Mexican war we had to pay dearly in men and treasure, a loss for which our acquisition of territory did not compensate. The lives of more than 3,000 American citizens were a part of the price we paid for that display of power, and something more than \$25,000,000 for military disbursements was another part.

For the civil war the figures of loss all around mount up to stupendous totals. The immediate financial losses were \$4,500,000,000 to the north and \$2,500,000,000 to the south, with such after results as a national debt of \$2,000,000,000, a crippled merchant marine, a ruined agricultural community, besides the losses occasioned in other parts of the world, including those consequent upon the cotton famine of Lancashire, and the loss of employment to more than 10,000 European laborers. Such, at least, are the losses computed by Leroy-Beaulieu in his "Les Guerres Contemporaines," causing him thus to close his chapter on our civil war: "Such a war. Its nature is so homicidal that it slays thousands of victims even at a distance of thousands of miles from the battlefield."

THAT WONDERFUL DEWEY. People Who Knew Him as a Boy in Vermont Not Surprised.

To have known Commodore Dewey is a claim to popularity that doesn't fall in these days. The man or the woman with Dewey reminiscences to tell is always sure of a listener. An old lady from Vermont found out the other day.

"Know George Dewey?" she said to a New York Sun correspondent. "Well, I guess I did. My, but he was a mischievous boy! And a schemer? Well, I guess one of his teachers found that out. It was in the fall of the year and the apples were ripe on the trees. There was one orchard with a particularly fine tree in it and the boys they did hanker after that fruit. I don't know as I blame 'em for it, either."

"At any rate, George Dewey he put two of the other boys up to helping him and they just pretty near cleaned out all the apples there were on that tree. Mad? Well, you never saw a man as mad as the owner of the orchard was, and he run right off to the school teacher to complain. The teacher came steaming along, when he spied the hoghead he crawled into it so as to have a good place to wait for them. Just as soon as he had got in, the boys sneaked up behind the hoghead and started it rolling down the hill, teacher and all, bumpity—bump bump! My! By the time it had stopped and the teacher had managed to get out the boys were pretty near home and he hadn't any more idea than the dead wood'd done it. You can just be sure that it wasn't the teacher that told that story."

stalled on many of our ships and is widely in use in the various navies of the world. The Fiske range finder is based upon the well known principle of land surveying with the transit and engineer's chain. If a surveying party come to a broad river whose width has to be determined, a base line is measured along the bank, and the angles which this line makes with a mark on the opposite bank are measured by the transit. Then knowing the length of the base line and the two angles, the distance across the river can be determined by trigonometry.

Applying this to the range finder, a base line is carefully measured between two points near opposite ends of the ship, and over each point a range finder, answering to the engineer's transit, is permanently set up. If the telescopes of the two finders are simultaneously converged upon the same point on a distant object (ship, fortress or city), the observers will be in possession of the trigonometrical data necessary to compute the distance, namely, the base and the two base angles.

In the distance, however, it would be difficult to make the necessary calculations, as the distance between the ships, and therefore, the observed angles, keep changing, and in order to make the determination of the distance automatic, Lieutenant Fiske placed his telescope in the circuit of a Wheatstone bridge and caused their change of position to record the distance of the object on the graduated scale of a delicate galvanometer. All that was now necessary was for the observers at the two range finders to keep the crosshairs of the telescope upon the same point of the ship, and the electric current translated, as it were, the angles into distances and recorded them by the movements of a needle over an arc graduated into hundreds and thousands of yards. One of these galvanometers is placed in the conning tower and one at each of the principal gun stations.

Served Him Right. "We like your house, Mr. Dawson," said the old gentleman, who thought of renting it for the season, "but you say in your advertisement that you won't take people with children."

"That's true," said Dawson. "I can't really; they do so much damage."

"I don't think you'd suffer much from mine, sir," said the old gentleman. "I cannot make an exception in your case, sir," returned Dawson, with some irritation, and the deal was declared off.

A few days later, relates Harper's Bazar, Dawson discovered that the old gentleman's children consisted of two unmarried daughters, aged 35 and 42 respectively.

On Second Thought. Washington Star: "Of course," said the European statesman's friend, "you are unalterably opposed to the Monroe doctrine."

"Well," was the reply with some hesitation; "I used to be. But I've been wondering whether it wouldn't be a good idea to have one of our own to keep the United States from going ahead too fast in the eastern hemisphere."

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