

THE TROOP

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER
A STORY OF THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER XI.

The officer who kept Dunwoodie committed the piddler transferred his charge to the custody of the regular sergeant of the guard. After admonishing the non-commissioned guardian of Harvey to omit no watchfulness in securing the prisoner, the youth wrapped himself in his cloak, and stretched on a bench before a fire, soon found the repose he needed. A rude shed extended the whole length of the rear of the building, and from off one of its ends had been partitioned a small apartment, that was intended as a repository for many of the lesser implements of husbandry and Betty's sleeping form. A second soldier, who was stationed near the house to protect the horses of the officers, could command a view of the outside of the apartment; and, as it was without window or outlet of any kind, excepting its door, the considerate sergeant thought this the most befitting

place in which to deposit his prisoner until the moment of his execution. "You look as if you would meet death like a man, and I have brought you to a spot where you can tranquilly arrange your thoughts, and be quiet and undisturbed," said the sentinel. "It is a fearful place to prepare for the last change in," said Harvey, gazing around his little prison with a vacant eye. "Why, for the matter of that," returned the veteran, "it can reckon but little in the last review, so that he finds them fit to pass the muster of another world. There have been stirring times in this country since the war began, and many have been deprived of their rightful goods. I oftentimes find it hard to reconcile even my lawful plunder to a tender conscience."

"These hands," said the piddler, stretching forth his meager, bowy fingers, "have spent years in toil, but not a moment in pilfering."

"It is well that it is so," said the honest-hearted soldier; "and, no doubt, you now feel it a great consolation. There are three great sins, that, if a man can keep his conscience clear of, why, by the mercy of God, he may hope to pass muster with the saints in heaven; they are stealing, murdering and desertion."

"Thank God," said Birch, with fervor, "I have never yet taken the life of a fellow-creature."

"As to killing a man in lawful battle, that is no more than doing one's duty. If the cause is wrong, the sin of such a deed, you know, falls on the nation, and a man receives his punishment here with the rest of the people; but murdering a cold blooded next to desertion as a crime in the eye of God."

"I never saw a soldier, therefore, never could desert," said the piddler, resting his face on his hand in a melancholy attitude. "I recommend you to say your prayers, and then to get some rest. There is no hope of your being pardoned; for Colonel Singleton has sent down the most positive orders to take your life whenever we meet you. No—nothing can save you."

"You say the truth," cried Birch. "It is now too late—I have destroyed my only safeguard. But he will do my memory justice at least."

"And who is he?"

"No one," added Harvey, anxious to say no more.

CHAPTER XII.

The Skinkers followed Captain Lawton with alacrity toward the quarters occupied by the troop of that gentleman. While in the presence of the major, the leader of the gang had felt himself under that restraint which vice must ever experience in the company of acknowledged virtue; but having left the house, he at once conceived that he was under the protection of a congenial spirit. There was a gravity in the manner of Lawton that deceived most of those who did not know him intimately. Drawing near his conductor, the leader commenced a confidential dialogue:

"It is always well for a man to know his friends from his enemies. I suppose Major Dunwoodie has the good opinion of Washington?"

"There are some who think so."

"Many of the friends of Congress in this country," the man proceeded, "wish the horse was led by some other officer; for my part, if I could only be covered by a troop of you, and then I could do many an important piece of service to the cause."

"Indeed, such as what?"

"For the matter of that, it could be made as profitable to the officer as it would be to us who did it," said the Skinker, with a look of the most significant meaning. "Why, near the royal lines, even under the very guns of the heights, might be good picking if we had a force to guard us."

"I thought the refugees took all that game to themselves."

"They do a little at it; but they are obliged to be sparing among their own people. I have been down twice, under an agreement with them; the first time they acted with honor; but the second they came upon us and drove us off, and took the plunder to themselves."

"That was a very dishonorable act, indeed, I wonder that an honorable man will associate with such rascals."

"It is necessary to have an understanding with some of them, or we might be taken; but a man without honor is

worse than a brute. Do you think Major Dunwoodie is to be trusted?"

"Why, I do not believe Dunwoodie would sell his command as Arnold wished to do; neither do I think him exactly trustworthy in a delicate business like this of yours."

"That's just my notion," rejoined the Skinker, with a self-approving manner.

By this time they had arrived at a better sort of farmhouse. The barns were occupied by the men of the troop, while the horses were arranged under long sheds. The latter were quietly eating, with smiles on their backs and bridles thrown on their necks, ready to be bit and mounted at the shortest warning. Lawton excused himself for a moment and entered his quarters. He soon returned, holding in his hand one of the common stable lanterns, and led the way to a large orchard. The gang followed the troop.

Approaching the captain, the Skinker renewed the discourse, with a view of establishing further confidence.

"Do you think the colonies will finally get the better of the king?" he inquired.

"Get the better?" echoed the captain, with impetuosity—then checking himself, he continued, "no doubt they will. If the French will give us arms and money, we can drive out the royal troops in six months."

"Well, so I hope we shall soon; and then we shall have a free government, and we, who fight for it, will get our reward."

"Oh," cried Lawton, "your claims will be indelible; while all these vile Tories who live at home peacefully, to take care of their farms, will be held in the contempt they merit. You have no farm, I suppose?"

"Not yet—but it will go hard if I do not get one before the peace is made. 'Right,' study your own interests, and you study the interests of your country; press the point of your own services, and fall at the Tories, and I'll bet my spurs against a rusty nail that you get to be a county clerk, at least."

"Don't you think that Paulding's party were fools in not letting the royal adjutant general escape?" said the man, thrown off his guard by the freedom of the captain's manner.

"Fools!" cried Lawton, with a bitter laugh; "ay, fools, indeed; King George would have paid them better, for he is richer. He would have made them gentlemen for their lives. But, thank God! there is a pardoning spirit in the people that seems miraculous. Men who have nothing, act as if the wealth of the Indies depended on their fidelity; all are not villains like yourself, or we should have been slaves to England years ago."

"How!" exclaimed the Skinker, starting back, and dropping his musket to the level of the other's breast; "am I betrayed, and are you my enemy?"

"Miscreant!" shouted Lawton, his sabre ringing in its steel scabbard as he struck the musket of the fellow from his hands, "offer but again to point your gun at me, and I'll cleave you to the middle."

"And you will not pay us, then, Captain Lawton?" said the Skinker, trembling in every joint; for just then he saw a party of mounted dragoons silently encircling the whole party.

"Oh! pay you—yes, you shall have the full measure of your reward. There is

the money that Colonel Singleton sent down for the captors of the spy," throwing a bag of guineas with disdain at the other's feet. "But ground your arms, you rascals, and so that the money is truly told."

The intimidated hand did as they were ordered; and while they were eagerly employed in this pleasing avocation, a few of Lawton's men privately knocked the hilts out of their muskets.

"Well," cried the impatient captain, "is it right? have you the promised reward?"

"There is just the money," said the leader; "and we will now go to our homes, with your permission."

"Hold! so much to redeem our promise—now for justice; we pay you for taking a spy, but we punish you for burning, robbing and murdering. Seize them, my lads, and give each of them the law of Moses—forty, say one."

This command was given to no unwilling listeners; and in the twinkling of an eye the Skinkers were stripped and flogged by the halbers of the party, to as many apple trees as were necessary to furnish one to each of the gang. Swords were quickly drawn, and fifty branches cut; from these were selected a few of the most supple of the twigs, and a willing dragoon was soon found to wield each of the weapons. Captain Lawton gave the word, and the uproar of Babel commenced in the orchard.

The flagellation was executed with great readiness and dispatch. Lawton directed his men to leave the Skinkers to replace their own clothes, and to mount their horses.

"You see, my friend," said the captain to the leader, "I can cover you to some purpose, when necessary. If we meet often, you will be covered with scars, which, if not very honorable, will at least be merited."

The fellow made no reply. He was lowly with his musket, and hastening his way to march; what, everything being ready, they proceeded silently toward some rocks at no great distance. The moon was just rising, and the group of dragoons could easily be distinguished where they had been left. Suddenly turning, the whole gang leaped their places and drew the triggers. The soldiers returned their futile attempt with a laugh of derision, the captain crying aloud:

"Ah! rascals, I knew you, and have taken away your flints."

"You should have taken away that in my pocket, too," shouted the leader, fring his gun the next instant. The bullet razed the ear of Lawton, who laughed as he shook his head, saying, "A miss as good as a mile." One of the dragoons was in the act of plunging his pike into his horse as the fellow fled. The distance to the rocks was but small, yet the speed of the horse compelled the rider to abandon both money and musket, to effect his escape. The soldier returned with his pike, and offered them to the acceptance of his captain, but Lawton rejected them, telling the man to retain them himself, until the rascal appeared in person to claim his property. The patrol departed, and the captain slowly returned to his quarters, with an intention of retiring to rest.

(To be continued.)

NEW YORK CITY OF BLONDES.

Lenon-Rind Treasures Appear as the Traveler Nears the Metropolis.

"I can always tell when I am getting in to New York by the way the blondes begin to thicken," said the traveling man. "When I am away out in the country districts, visiting the small towns, the sight of a real blonde is rare. The hair of the majority of the country maids is dark, though I pass an occasional light-colored or reddish head on the streets. Their hair is often arranged becomingly, but never with a Marcel wave. Their complexion never have the steamed appearance of the city belle, but are fresh and wholesome."

"But day after day as I get nearer New York the lenon-rind blonde begins to crop up. She boards the train bound for New York from the little town where she has probably been visiting the home folk or other relatives, and her thoughts probably turn once more to the quick-lunch cashier's desk where she presides with chowing gum and dignity, or to her place third from the right in the second row of the chorna. The dark-haired sisters begin to melt away the closer the train gets to the city, so that by the outskirts of New York are sighted the dark crop has given way entirely to the peroxide fairy with the rippling Marcel wave and the adjustable waistline. I had heard about blonde being the proper thing in hair, but I thought it was a comic-paper joke till I took to the road. One thing certain—New York is the city of the blondes."—New York Press.

Sparrows Take Cold Plunge.

There are various opinions as to whether cold bathing is harmful or beneficial, but among the sparrows that are so numerous in the parks there seems to be no doubt that the cold plunge is exhilarating and delightful, says the New York Herald.

In Bryant Park the other morning, when the temperature was almost at zero, a crowd of men around the drinking fountain near the 42d street side looked at several sparrows bathing in the icy water and chirping with glee as they hopped in and out. The fountain was covered with ice and in the basin there was just enough clear water left for the birds to bathe in. They hopped in without the slightest show of trepidation, submerged themselves for a minute or so and hopped out again, ruffling their feathers and chirping in unison.

If it is true that in watching the habits of animals and birds we learn how nature directs us in methods to insure good health then surely this example of the little sparrows bathing in the icy fountain seems to argue in favor of cold water for bathing purposes.

But, of course, those of us who are so sensitive to cold and so accustomed to overheated apartments are not likely to enjoy the cold tub as did those sparrows. For years they have lived in our rugged climate, surviving blizzards and zero weather and even thriving in it. Consequently we are not protected by the hardness which these little birds possess. But as an object lesson this sight in Bryant Park was very interesting, indicating that nature has taught these birds by instinct that cold bathing is best for them.

The Third House of Congress.

The Third House, as the Lobby is sometimes called, is the legislative Annex of the Special Interests. It is the House of Special Representatives, and its membership is a curious study in the widely different.

Its meeting place is the lobby and committee rooms of the nation's capitol, the hotel parlors, the lawyer's office, the street, the banquet room, the little back room, the bar, the roadhouse, the home—anywhere the legislator may be found and personally approached. That is the object of a lobby—personal contact with the people's representatives—and the influence upon legislation worked thereby.

If legislators were perfect there would be no lobby. If they were perfectly wise there would be no occasion for the lobbyist who desires "to inform" them; if perfectly honest there would be no occasion for the lobbyist who desires to "make it worth while." If perfectly patriotic there would be no occasion for the lobbyist who desires for himself "a little personal favor"—at the people's expense. The existence of a lobby is premised on human frailty. It is present to prey on human weakness; to warp the action of the legislative body by appeal to vanity, ignorance, cupidity, or fear.—Success Magazine.

The Very Reason.

Mr. Nuritch—What! You want to marry my daughter? Why, you ain't able to support yourself.

Young Nervey—Quite so. That's the very excuse I gave to my family for wanting to marry your daughter.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Admission.

"Bliggins is always repeating what his children say."

"Yes," admires those children. "They are the only people I know of who can make Bliggins keep quiet and let some one else talk."—Washington Star.

Some men refuse to prosper. Give them a good business, and they will go off and leave it on busy days.

THE PASSING OF THE FOREST.

As long as the forest shall live,
The streams shall flow onward, still singing
Sweet songs of the woodland, and bringing
The bright living waters that give
New life to all mortals who thirst,
But the faces of men shall be cursed.

Yes, the hour of destruction shall come
To the children of men in that day
When the forest shall pass away;
When the low wailing voices are dumb;
And death's devastation and dearth
Shall be spread o'er the face of the earth.

Avenge the death of the wood,
The turbulent streams shall outpour
Their vials of wrath, and no more
Shall their banks hold back the high flood,
Which shall rush o'er the harvest of men;
As swiftly receding again.

Lo! after the flood shall be dearth,
And the rain no longer shall fall
On the parching fields; and a pall
As of ashes, shall cover the earth;
And dust-clouds shall darken the sky;
And the deep water wells shall be dry.

And the rivers shall sink in the ground,
And every man cover his mouth
From the thickening dust, in that drouth;
Fierce famine shall come; and no sound
Shall be borne on the desolate air,
But a murmur of death and despair.

—Century Magazine.

A Last Resource

"I decline to accept this girl as my daughter-in-law," said the Squire.

"It is because you do not know her," said the young man.

"I do not know her, as you say, nor do I intend to make her acquaintance," was the grim response.

"You are cruelly unjust," cried Geoffrey, in sudden heat.

The elder man shrugged his shoulders.

"Allow me to remind you that you must have been fully aware from the first what my sentiments would be."

"No, sir, I was not. I knew, of course, that there had been some sort of a quarrel between you and her father, but I thought you would look over that when you found how necessary she was to my happiness."

The Squire smiled a bitter smile.

"I gave you credit for greater wisdom," said he. "Well, if you indulged in illusions before, you are undecieved now I hope."

"And you really mean that you refuse your consent to my marriage with Nita Harvey?"

"I really mean that I refuse my consent to your marriage with Nita Harvey," repeated the Squire, unflinchingly.

"There is no more to be said, then," rejoined Geoffrey, and was turning away when his father stopped him.

"Wait!" he exclaimed. "Do you realize the consequences of disobedience to my wishes?"

"I suppose I do. I suppose that I must not ever bring Nita home—here, that she would not be admitted."

The Squire gave vent to a short laugh.

"There is more involved than the closing of the doors of Hilton Hall against her. There is the loss of your income."

The young man looked full at his father.

"You would stop my allowance?"

"Certainly I should," came the prompt reply.

Geoffrey's mouth twitched; but it was with no sign of discomfiture he rejoined; "I should have to turn to and work, then."

"Yes," quoth the other, ineffectually, adding, "And now I trust you understand the position?"

The young man bowed his head; "I do, sir."

had a delightful time. They went to theaters and concerts, and enjoyed themselves generally, of course, in a modest style; but then this style was modest only in comparison to Geoffrey's former mode of life. And even with this display of frugality his capital lessened, and with quite remarkable rapidity. However, he was in no wise alarmed.

He set up his case in a room with a fine north light, and commenced his painting.

He had heard of the big prices artists obtained for their productions, and though he did not imagine he should get anything like the same amount for his, he did think he should have no difficulty in selling them.

It was just this difficulty that gave him his first check.

But he worked on cheerily, worked the harder even.

He had written to the squire immediately after the wedding, and in return had received a curt note in which his father informed him that he was leaving home, and that it was his intention to travel for a year or two.

Geoffrey told himself that he must prove to him of what metal he was



THEN HE LIFTED HIS FACE.

made, to show him he could be independent in deed as well as word. But alas! He had mistaken taste for talent, and his pictures remained in his studio still. Times were getting hard now; first luxuries had to be dispensed with, then comforts, till there came a day when the pretty home had perforce to be given up and the furniture sold.

The downward stages were rapid after that, for barely made his appearance, and the expenses consequent on his advent were terrible heavy. Now and again a dealer would purchase a small painting at a small price. For the rest his pictures were unsalable.

They moved constantly now, and each migration was from bad to worse. He tried for work, but failed to obtain it, save an occasional job for which he was thankful to receive as payment a shilling or two or even a few pence.

He had acquiesced the squire with the birth of his boy. But no acknowledgment of his letter had reached him. He wondered whether his silence was because his father was still absent from England, or because his displeasure was so abiding. Well, whatever the reason, he would write no more to him. So he determined, but circumstances were too strong for him. Winter came, a hard, cold winter, and found him without the means of procuring food and firing. So for the sake of those helpless ones who were dependent on him, he overcame his pride, and wrote to his father a simple statement of affairs and asked for help.

But neither to this letter did there come a reply.

And lower yet in the abyss of destitution did the little family descend till actual starvation stared them in the face.

Squire Hilton, meanwhile, had been wandering the world over.

His son had deeply disappointed him, and he intended to wash his hands of him entirely, to banish all thought of him from remembrance.

But despite this resolution, softening memories of the erring Geoffrey would creep into his mind.

He was ashamed of his weakness, and even to himself would not acknowledge that it was paternal longings which induced him to a sudden resolve to return home.

His movements had been so uncertain that only when he cabled an address were letters forwarded. Consequently, there was a vast accumulation of correspondence awaiting him when he reached Hilton.

Geoffrey's two letters, the one informing him of the boy's birth, the other telling of the dire straits to which he was reduced were among it.

To his other letters the Squire paid no attention, but after reading these epistles, he consulted a Bradshaw and gave orders for the dog-cart to be in readiness to convey him to the station early the following morning. He slept badly that night, and the journey to town seemed an interminable one. Arrived at St. Pancras he hailed a cab, and noted the man's look of astonishment when he gave him Geoffrey's address. Little wonder either, he mused grimly, remarking the neighborhoods they traversed.

At length the Jehu pulled up his horse short.

"Cave's Buildings as you wants is down that there court," he explained to his fare. "It ain't exactly a genteel part, is it?" and he smiled broadly as he pocketed the coins handed him, and drove off while the squire walked gingerly down the narrow alley indicated. A tumble-down structure faced him at the end, and inquiry of a bare-faced urchin elicited the fact that this was the place he sought.

A dim, dark entry! An evil-smelling interior! And within was the home of his son and his grandson.

His heart sickened, and he turned away. He was too overcome to enter. He must collect his senses ere he could meet Geoffrey. Presently he would return, but the shock had been great. Taking no heed to the way he retraced his steps down the narrow alley, and then wandered along one street and another, till he found himself in a wide thoroughfare where there was considerable traffic.

It was Saturday night, too, and there were plenty of people buying and bartering at the stalls which bordered the roadway.

Presently he came to a stretch of blank wall, the wall of a disused churchyard, now converted into a playground for children. Crouched against this wall was a man's figure, while on the pavement beside him were sketched various bright-colored scenes.

As Mr. Hilton approached two women with shawls drawn closely round them, and untidy uncovered heads, stopped to criticize these productions.

Their sudden stopping arrested the squire's progress, and in spite of himself his attention was attracted to the gaudy sketches.

One was the rough representation of a large country house, and for all its lack of finish the squire recognized it—Hilton Hall.

The women had moved on after first dropping a copper into the cap which was placed ready for the contribution of the charitable.

The artist was huddled against the wall, his head drooped, his thin coat dragged across his chest as protection against the keen wind.

The squire bent down, and laying his hand on his shoulder shook him.

Then he lifted his face, and at sight of it a hoarse cry broke from the elder man: "Geoffrey, my son, my son, forgive me."

This was healed the breach between father and son. And the doors of Hilton Hall opened wide to receive not only Geoffrey, but Geoffrey's wife and child as well.—London S. S. Times.

Sermons of the Week

Crucifixion.—The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the historic expression on the plane of social existence of the travail of the ages.—Rev. J. W. Lee, Methodist, Atlanta.

Friendship.—Generosity is one of the lovely traits of true friendship. It comes out in feeling in conduct and in special tokens in the form of gifts.—Rev. J. D. Burrell, Presbyterian, Brooklyn.

More than a Match.—The press, the pulpit and the platform are more than a match for corruption (funds) and the wicked devices of a political organization.—Rev. Dr. Banks, Methodist, New York City.

Sin.—How God permits sin to be, or to use Principal Fairbairn's words, that God does not prevent evil, remains ever a problem for deepest thought.—Rev. H. G. Ogden, Methodist, Louisville.

Critics.—I suppose we must have critics, just as we must have undertakers, but the business is not to my taste. I never enjoy finding fault, even as a fine art.—Rev. Frank Crane, Unitarian, Worcester, Mass.

Commercial Greed.—What can the public expect from officials who are hatched by corporation commercial greed and pledged to the selfish interests of the few before his election?—Rev. B. Craig, Disciple, Denver.

The March of Civilization.—The world is not outgrowing Christ. Religious traditions may try to un-Christian the centuries, but He still asserts His divinity in the march of civilization.—Rev. F. C. Bremer, Methodist, Normal Park, Ill.

Progress.—There is and there can be no question as to the world's progress. The man who doubts is as irrational as he is unbelieving, as unscientific as he is unscrupulous in his thinking.—Rev. A. V. Raymond, Congregationalist, Schenectady, N. Y.

The World.—The world will not be up with the church until all merchandise has become honest merchandise; until all governments are honest governments, and all nations have become evangelized.—Rev. J. A. Leas, Lutheran, Portland, Ore.

Character.—Character is a result of product. Character tells the story of our conduct and industry. Character is the fruitage of our thinking, our willing, our loving, our doing. And character is the man.—Rev. A. H. Goodenough, Methodist, Bristol, Conn.

Hell.—There are two periods in every life, the period of receptivity and the time of fruitage. He who receives and never gives is at war with the whole universe and if there be no hell in the next life he will make one in this.—Rev. Bruce Brown, Disciple, Chicago.

Suffering.—Cities, like individuals, need the discipline of suffering to bring out of them all that is best in character and manhood. They must have sorrow mingled with success to give serious tone to their development.—Rev. Dewitt M. Benham, Presbyterian, Baltimore.

The Future.—The only way to get hold of the future is through the present. Many dollars have been spent on the fortune teller and the palmist to get at it that way. A man's future can best be determined by knowing what he is now.—Rev. W. H. Ryder, Methodist, Los Angeles.

Waste.—In this country last year considerably over \$1,000,000,000 was wasted on alcoholic beverages, or about \$17 per capita for every man, woman and child in the United States. This amount would actually engirdle the globe with a girde of silver dollars.—Rev. J. Bobbs, Baptist, New Orleans.

Home Life.—The city is not good soil for the home. The home influences cannot last where several families occupy a single house. Homes in cities are disappearing at the two social extremes. Among the rich hotel and club life is being substituted for home life.—Rev. G. H. Buckley, Methodist, Philadelphia.

Modern Jacobs.—There are Jacobs of to-day. Not long ago a Boston millionaire took into partnership a young man who had just concluded a shrewd deal. The partnership lasted for three years. At the beginning the Boston man had \$3,000,000, and at the end of the three years the shrewd young man had the \$3,000,000.—Rev. M. S. Terry, Methodist, Evanston, Ill.

The Best Life.—The fullest life is the disciplined and temperate life. Without godliness, abstinence and high thinking the pleasures of sense are gross and brutal, and they perish in the using. Thus it may be that living for God means vastly more than to die for him, a martyr may be less noble than a servant. Not death, but life, is the Christian ideal.—Rev. J. P. Marlett, Methodist, Tacoma, Wash.

Public Justice.—Is there need that we restore somewhat of the severity of the paternal order in the administration of public justice? No crime stands alone, but as no act of sin stands alone. It has other links of it. The assassin does not grow into the worst of criminals without the aid of favorable conditions to give him nourishment. Whatever is done we must aim to produce a higher type of man in every walk of life.—Rev. Mr. Tebbetta, Episcopalian, North Adams, Mass.

Misunderstood.—"Gimme a shave," said the stranger, dropping into the chair.

"Yes, sir," said the barber. "Close?"

"No, I ain't close. You'll get yer tip if that's what yer drivin' at."—Philadelphia Press.

Very Soft.—"Do you believe that a soft answer turneth away wrath?"

"If it did lovers would never quarrel."—Houston Post.