

Trapping a Spy.

BY M. QUAD.

CONCLUDED.

THE question being one of speed, I overhauled him very shortly, but he refused to check his pace until I had given him a bullet in the shoulder. Then, with a horrid oath, he let fall the weapon which he had grasped, and he was my prisoner. I hitched my horse behind his wagon, clambered up beside him, turned the vehicle about and started for the city.

I will give the man all due credit. He was a brave fellow. He tried hard to get away, fought well, and though his wound was painful and the way rough, not so much as a groan escaped him. And when I had taken him to the old Capitol Prison, found the letters, and he knew the case would go hard with him, he would not bend an inch. No threats or promises could make him compromise any one. Even when he was offered his liberty if he would tell who had written the letters, he bit his lips and refused to speak.

But I knew all about it, and his cell door had hardly closed, when I was planning to capture the others. It was hardly probable that they would hear of Stevens' capture for a day or two, but I must work fast and make no mistakes. My object was to start Elliott or Payson through the lines with letters, that I might capture them with proofs. At the tea-table I invented another big yarn, full of just such points as the trio were waiting to secure, and I had no doubt that another bundle of letters would be made up that night for the milkman. But no milkman appeared next morning. The lady apologized at breakfast time. And the conclusion was that the man was sick. After leaving the house I went to the office, got a soldier to dress in citizen's clothes, took the milk cart from the barn, purchased a few quarts of milk at a grocery, and then sent the soldier on his errand. He was instructed to tell my landlady that Mr. Stevens had fallen and hurt himself, and had been obliged to send him with the cart. This would lull all suspicion, and also account for the milk not being delivered at the usual hour. The soldier did his errand well, and the wagon came back and was again secreted.

At dinner-time the accident of Mr. Stevens was thoroughly canvassed, and my regrets were as numerous as any. In furtherance of my plan, I stated, as a secret which must go no further, that all arrangements had been made for an advance on Centerville within five days. The news caused a flutter, as I hoped it would. Letters were written again that night, but Mr. Stevens did not put in his appearance next morning. Instead, the soldier was sent around again, and he told them that Stevens would not be out for a week. If this was the case, some one must take Mr. Stevens' place. Such information as I had given must be forwarded without delay.

At noon, the lady began quizzing me as to how one could secure a pass to go through the lines. I told her that it could be had at the War Department, providing one was loyal and had a good excuse.

"Now there's a good fellow—try and get a pass this afternoon for Mr. Elliott, will you?" she pleaded. "He has some property which he wants to look to, and you yourself can testify that we are all loyal and patriotic."

I couldn't testify to any such thing, but I promised to secure the pass so that Elliott could have it at five o'clock. I knew that he was going to carry letters through to Centerville, and I proposed to aid him all I could to partly accomplish his object. I did not know how he would go, and so I must watch him. It was of course an easy matter to secure the pass, and for certain reasons I sent it to him by a messenger. Before he received it, I had changed my disguise. This time I had on a well worn suit, an old hat, carried a whip in my hand, was padded out to increase my size, and was a genuine specimen of a Virginia farmer. Taking my situation near the cafe I had not waited ten minutes before Elliott appeared and walked down the street. Following after him, I trailed him to a livery stable, and heard him order a saddle-horse to be ready for him at nine in the evening. This was sufficient. I saw that he was going over the long bridge, and that he could be captured as I had captured Stevens.

I did not go to the house again that evening, thinking that the family might want to make some preparations for Elliott's expedition which would be retarded by my presence. They would ascribe my absence to the pressure of business at the War Department, and this idea would hurry Elliott off. After a lunch, and a talk with the chief, I secured a horse and rode out to the picket line, arrived there about dusk. Making inquiries from the officer in command of the advance picket post, I learned that the milkman Stevens lived about a half a mile further down the road, and a quarter of a mile back from it. He had passed so often that he was well known to the men, none of whom mistrusted that he was other than a good Union man. From one of the officers who had been to the house, I learned that the family consisted of only three persons—husband, wife, and a boy about fifteen years old. There was

some curiosity among them to know why I was so anxious to obtain information of the family, but they got little satisfaction. Stevens' house being situated on the neutral ground between the armies, I had an idea that it was frequently resorted to by the Confederates, who came after letters and other information. If I could, I was determined to break up the whole nest at one blow.

I believed that Elliott would call at the house, even if he went further. It seemed to me that he must deliver his letters to some one there, stop a while, and then return within the Union lines to continue his vocation. Though I could capture him on the road, I thought it better to let him pass on to the house, and then follow him and see what sort of a nest it was. Acting on this idea, I left my horse at the picket, and at about nine o'clock slipped away from the men and went off down the road without letting them know which way I had gone. I had two good revolvers with me, and had borrowed a pair of hand cuffs of the chief, thinking that Elliott might prove refractory.

I went down to a point within thirty rods of the lane running to Stevens' house, and then secreted myself in the bushes beside the road. I was then within a quarter of a mile of the Confederate picket. After satisfying myself that my weapons were in order, I had nothing to do but wait. The night was quite dark, and so cool that I at first shivered and could scarce keep my teeth from playing a tune. But the excitement of watching and listening soon put me into a sweat, and I thought no more of the chilly winds.

Shortly after ten o'clock two sounds full of meaning caught my ear at once. One was the tramp of horse's feet down the road, the other the roll of carriage-wheels up the road. In a moment more I had visitors from each way, and they met exactly opposite my hiding-place. "Captain," Elliott came from Arlington, and the daughters of my landlady, seated in a buggy with a negro driver, came from the south. As they met all stopped. The next moment, Elliott sang out to know who the party was.

"Why, that's Captain Elliott!" exclaimed a female voice. "Why, what are you doing here?"

For ten or fifteen minutes the friends did nothing but explain, exclaim, and inquire. Elliott told them that he was going to Stevens' with letters, and the ladies stated that they were on their way home. I heard them tell him that he would meet some one at the house who was expecting a messenger from Washington; to which he replied that he would remain there all night and return to Washington in the morning. I had made up my mind that he would visit Washington again that night, but I did not tell him so. Finally, he drove away, the carriage rolled on, and then I got out of my hiding-place. Knowing the location of the house, I crossed the fields to reach it, instead of keeping in the road. Getting within a few rods of the building, I waited several minutes in order that the inmates might settle down to a conversation with Elliott. I was within a rod of the lane, and had just started forward, when I heard some one cough, and the next moment caught sight of a man coming through the gate. I argued that he must be one of the news-carriers, and if so, would have letters with him to deliver to Elliott. I could capture him then as well as at any other time, I thought, and so I stepped out and confronted him.

"Halloo, Stevens!" he exclaimed, with a start of surprise at my sudden appearance. "What in the devil did you want to scare me so for?"

"See, here, stranger!" I replied, clicking a revolver under his nose; "my name isn't Stevens, and if you don't hold up your arms, I'll blow the top of your head over the gate!"

"Why, what do you mean—" "Do just as I tell you, and do it instantly!" I interrupted, raising the weapon as if to fire.

Up went his arms, and I made him walk up to the fence. Telling him that I would surely kill him if he spoke a loud word or attempted any resistance, I laid down my revolver and searched him, getting at least a score of letters. When I had searched him I handcuffed his hands behind him and drove him past the dwelling to the smoke-house. I knew that the farmer must have a smoke-house, and kept hunting around for it until it loomed up in the darkness.

"I am going to put you in here for a while, my friend," I whispered as I opened the door, "and I want to give you a word of advice. If you attempt to get out, or speak above a whisper, I will be on hand to put a bullet into your head. I hope you understand me."

He might not heed my words, after all, and so I determined to secure the door. It had a big iron latch on the outside, and I hunted around, found a stick, and jammed it in over the strip which held up the latch. The smoke-house made a pretty good prison, and there was little danger of his getting out.

My attention was now directed to the house. One of the kitchen windows faced me, and I could see the curtain was up. Waiting a few minutes to see if the prisoner was going to raise an alarm, and find-

ing him disposed to remain quiet, I crept cautiously up to the window and looked in. There sat Elliott, Mrs. Stevens and the boy, all talking busily. I could not hear their words, but as I watched, Elliott displayed the pass I had secured for him, and the three had a laugh at my expense. When he put the pass back into his pocket, he threw open his coat, and I got a glance at the butt of a revolver. He had the prudence to arm himself, and I had no doubt that he possessed the courage to defend himself. How was I to capture him? If I knocked at the door he would be on his guard, and though not recognizing me, perhaps he would not become my prisoner without a fierce struggle. I must get the advantage of him in some way.

I was still looking through the window, watching all that passed, when the woman rose up, opened the stove, and looked in the woodbox for fuel. There was none there, and I saw her look at the boy and make a motion. I knew in a moment he was coming out doors for wood. The wood-pile was between me and the smoke-house, and I ran back towards it. In a moment more the boy opened the door, began whistling a tune as he stepped out in the darkness, and came straight to the pile. I sank down, and stopped within three feet of me and bent over and began gathering up the sticks. As softly as a cat I rose up, crept up close to him, and suddenly seized him by the neck. He started to cry out, but I had whirled him around and got hold of his throat before he could give the alarm. He was not near my match in strength, and I had him down in a moment. I did not intend to hurt him, and only clasped his throat tight enough to prevent him from screaming out. When he had ceased to struggle, I let up a little on his throat and whispered:

"Boy, I'm a Yankee soldier, and if you make the least noise, I'll drink every drop of your blood! If you keep still and do as I tell you, you shall not be hurt. Now, sir, who is in the house?"

"M—mother—and Captain E—Elliott," "Who else? don't tell me a lie!"

"No one else—but mother expects Mr. Green this evening."

Then that was Mr. Green whom I had fast and tight in the smoke-house.

"Now, boy," I continued, "I have got Mr. Green locked up in the smoke-house, and I am going to put you in there with him. If you open your mouth or try to get out, I will shoot you down in an instant!" He promised implicit obedience if I would spare his life, and we were on the road to the receptacle of my prisoners, when Mrs. Stevens opened the door and called for him to hurry along with the wood.

"Tell her that you are coming!" I commanded, and he shouted the words. Satisfied, the woman shut the door.

I then hurried him into the prison, fastened the door, and hastened back to the house. Just as I struck the step, I drew a revolver and commenced whistling as if it were the boy. As I opened the door, Elliott was standing with his back towards me, looking at a picture on the wall, and the woman was in the pantry.

"Captain Elliott, hold up your arms!" I shouted, almost reaching him before he turned.

I had the revolver on a line with his head, and I never saw a man more amazed. He could do nothing but stare at me.

"Up with your arms over your head!" I commanded, as he seemed about to reach for his pistol. "If you hesitate another instant, I'll shoot you down in your tracks!"

Up went his arms, for he saw that I had the advantage. The woman was out by this time, very much excited, but fortunately did not interfere, as some of her Southern sisters would have done.

"What does this mean—who are you, sir?" demanded Elliott, getting his voice for the first time.

"You are my prisoner, and that is enough!" "Walk this way—turn around, keep those hands up—there! Now, Mrs. Stevens, I want you to take everything out of his pockets and lay the articles on the table."

The captain swore, and the woman hesitated, but I made her do it. Out came the revolver, a bundle of letters, a pipe, a wallet, and finally there was nothing more. "Now, captain, lie down on the floor, and you, woman, bring me that clothes-line from behind the stove."

There was more swearing, and more hesitancy, but the revolver was a great persuader. When I had the rope, I made the captain turn over on his face, and then tied his arms behind him. He was tolerably secure, fast enough until he should reach the smoke-house. Making the woman get me a lantern and light it, I ordered the captain out ahead, and we started, the woman getting a warning to keep still as we passed out. The two other prisoners were safe, and going in, I gave the boy the key to the handcuffs, and holding lantern and revolver, I made him take off one cuff and change it over to Elliott's wrist. Then having my men fast and safe, I started for the Union picket, telling the boy that there was a squad of Yankees near by, that he would be killed if he left the house for an hour.

On the way over the field, the captain suddenly laid down and refused to go, but the click of the revolver induced him to

change his mind. He also shouted out once, hoping to bring the Confederate picket down upon us, but he suddenly abandoned the idea, knowing that I would shoot him rather than let him escape. Half an hour after, I had them both at the picket, and long enough before daybreak, they were behind the bars of the old Capitol. I was as quiet as possible in taking them there, but in some way, the news of the arrest got abroad, and the next morning when I made an official call at Payson's cafe and at my landlady's, both places were closed, the inmates gone, and I never heard of them afterwards.

As to Stevens, Elliott and Green, there was an abundance of proof to convict them. Green was kept in prison a few months and then released, but what became of the others I do not know. Perhaps they were hung—it would have been nothing strange, considering the circumstances.—*Baltimore's Monthly Magazine.*

Postage Stamps—How Prepared.

As soon as they emerge from the hydraulic press, postage stamps are gummed. The paste is made from clear starch, or rather its dextrine, which is acted upon chemically and then boiled, forming a clear, smooth, slightly sweet mixture. Each sheet of stamps is taken separately, placed upon a flat board, and its edges covered with a metal frame. Then the paste is smeared on with a large whitewash brush, and the sheet is laid between two wire racks and placed on a pile with others to dry. Great care is taken in the manufacture of this paste, which is perfectly harmless. This gratifying fact has been conclusively proved by an analysis recently made by an eminent chemist. After the gumming, another pressing in the hydraulic press follows. Then more counting—in fact, stamps are counted no less than thirteen times during their processes of manufacture. The sheets are then cut in half, each portion containing one hundred stamps, this being done by girls, with ordinary hand shears. Next follows the perforation, which is performed by machinery. The perforations are first made in a perpendicular line, and afterward in a horizontal line. Another pressing follows, this time to get rid of the raised edges on the backs of the stamps made by the dies, and this ends the manufacture. A separate apartment is devoted to the packing and sending off the stamps to the different post offices. It will be seen by this account that any absurd rumors concerning the poisonous, or unclean, properties of postage stamps, are utterly without foundation.

Hit or Miss.

Among the members of one of our oldest Methodist churches was a good old brother named Hartwell, who manifested his appreciation of the points of the sermon by shouting out "Amen," "Praise the Lord," &c. Being an ignorant man, very often they came in at the wrong time. On one occasion, as a minister was exhorting his hearers to repentance, fixing his eye on a group of seemingly indifferent young men, he exclaimed: "Young men, you are going down to perdition!" The voice of the excited minister aroused our good brother, and he shouted "Amen! so be it! Praise the Lord!" After that the meeting was a failure. At the close of the service the pastor admonished him to be more careful in the future, and our good brother for awhile—though he seemed to suffer torment—kept still, till one evening, carried away by the fervor of the meeting, he could no longer contain himself; but jumping up he shouted "Amen, brother—hit or miss, Amen!"

Selling Children.

The Tidoutine Journal tells a story about a woman from Triumph going over to Fagundas and selling her own child. It says, the woman came from Triumph to Fagundas on foot, bearing in her arms a lovely babe ten or fifteen days old. She offered to sell the babe for money to whomsoever wished to buy. At last a person taking a pity on the poor mother, who was in need of money and in want, offered to take the babe. The purchaser paid the mother ten dollars, and the parties went before a justice of the peace, and the bargain was made as sure as law and signatures could make it. The mother then walked back to Triumph. Here she told her tale, and a person told her he would pay \$25 for the babe. Back to Fagundas the woman walked, but the purchaser declined to give it up. In vain were protestations; the bargain had been legally made, and the babe sold, and so the mother walked to Triumph without it.

Sour Plums.

An Irishman while in a fruit store, saw some persimmons on the counter. He has never seen this kind of fruit before, and was anxious to taste them. While the storekeeper's back was turned he dexterously transferred a handful to his pocket. With his back to the storekeeper, he began eating the sour fruit. His movements had been observed by two or three persons, who laughed loudly when they witnessed Pat's expressions of disgust at the intense acidity of his mouth. Pat was annoyed and he excitedly exclaimed, addressing those who were grinning at him.

"Ye may grin, ye mutton-headed idiots! but I can lather the sowl out iv the man that split the vinegar over thim plums."

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