

a bayonet to find the sun well past the zenith.

"Get up with you and let somebody take your place while you foot it a bit," a rough voice said; and Richard sprang from the vehicle and helped little Billy Bryce, of his own town, into his place, exclaiming vehemently against his own selfish slumbering.

"Nay, nay," said the lad, "I am not wounded, more's the shame to me for being taken! Besides, I have had a long rest under the wagon here, for we halted before noon. I begged the guard not to waken you, but I put your rations aside. Here—you must be near to starvation."

Richard caught eagerly at the pork and ship biscuit which the lad held out; it seemed ages since he had tasted food.

"And you'll be better with your head washed," the guard said, not unkindly, pointing to a little stream that trickled by the roadside; and Richard was quick to obey.

In a little while they were in motion again, this time more leisurely, and once more thoughts of escape filled Richard with a restless energy. The country was more broken here; to hide would be easier, and he waited impatiently for the coming of the dark, determined at all hazards to make the attempt—another sunset might put him behind prison bars. But he was doomed to disappointment, for they were not to march all night, but with the early stars pitched their tents upon a flat stretch of country that opened to the east.

Worn out by the long marches and the cloying sand through which they had toiled, the army soon slept profoundly. Tied together for greater security, the prisoners lay like so many sardines in their tent before which trod a sentinel. At first there was much whispering among them as to their probable fate, and not a few solemn farewells to home and dear ones.

"I shall never see my mother any more, for I know I shall die in that dreadful prison; but you'll be good to me, won't you, Richard?" groaned little Billy

Bryce, who lay next to Richard with his right hand tied to the latter's left.

And Richard comforted him as best he could, and by and by the lad slept with the others.

"I hope they will always let me stay with you," had been his last sleepy whisper. For among the bigger boys Richard had been his hero and protector, and no service was ever too great for him to undertake for his idol. And Richard had petted and yet imposed upon him in the way peculiar to all boys of a larger growth when a small one asks nothing better than to obey. It was really to be with Richard as much as to share in the war that he had stolen away from his mother and followed the Hillsboro' men to the field.

At last the tent was quiet save for the deep breathing of the tired men, but Richard could not close his eyes; he meant to get away. After the watch was changed toward midnight was the time he had set as the most favorable for his plan. All being then found secure, the new guard would be over-sure—and he, like the rest, was worn out with the trials of the past two days. Certainly that was the best time; a confident, tired sentinel ought not to be hard to elude. And he lay still, softly gnawing the rope that bound him to Billy. As he was at the end of the line his right arm was free, and so his fingers aided his teeth to pick the threads apart. Thus an hour went by, and then the lad beside him stirred.

"What are you doing, Richard?" he whispered; then added quickly, as his arm felt the loosened cord: "Why, you have bitten the rope in two. You are going to escape? Take me with you, in mercy's name, Richard; do not leave me to die in the prison yonder! Richard, let me go, too."

"H—sh!" whispered Richard sternly, for the boy's excitement was like to arouse the whole body of prisoners, perchance even alarm the guard outside. "Be still, Billy! I cannot take you—two could never pass the guard. I am sorry; I—I—wish you had not waked."

But the lad, whose arm was now free