

months than you are years old—if by any chance your general hangs on that long, which is not likely.”

Richard shivered at mention of a prison, but shrugged his shoulders with outward calm. “A man must bear the fortunes of war if he be a true soldier. Prison life is harder than fighting, but some must carry the heavy end of the burden, and ’tis not for me to bemoan if it falls to me. Know you in which of your pest-holes we are like to be confined?”

The soldier looked into the clear, steady eyes for a moment before replying: “You’re a rum chap to take your medicine without a whine. I like your sort, and I hope, when this cursed war is done, you’ll be found alive; but it isn’t likely, for methinks you are to go to the old Sugar House in New York. ’Tis as full as an ant-hill now, but they’ll shove the poor devils a bit closer together and squeeze you in. You’ll have plenty of time, but not much room, to meditate on your evil doings against King George. Still, I hope you’ll live through it.”

He picked up the empty can out of which the prisoner had been drinking and moved on. Richard, who had been sitting upright during the conversation, sank back upon the ground and pulled his cap over his eyes. The old Sugar House! Too well he knew of the misery and degradation in store for those who crossed its threshold. No escapes were ever effected, and the hope of exchange, unless one were an officer, was too slim to dwell upon; Washington’s captures went for higher game than privates and raw recruits. But two things could open those relentless gates to him—death or the end of the struggle; and the latter seemed far enough away.

And Joscelyn! would she care that he suffered and died by inches? would she think of him regretfully, tenderly, when all was done? It was hard to love a girl of whose very sympathy one was not sure; and yet he knew he had rather have her mockery than another woman’s caresses.

For an hour he lay upon the ground, his heart convulsed with grief, but his body so

rigidly quiet that his companions thought he slept. They could not tell that under his cap his eyes were staring wide. By and by the intense heat of the evening set the wound in his head to throbbing, and, rousing up, he begged the corporal of the guard for a little water and a bandage. The man—the same with whom he had talked before—brought these to him after a little delay, and found for him in his own kit a bit of healing salve, which his English mother had given him at parting.

“She said ’twould cure bad blood, and methinks yours is bad enough to put it to the test,” he said laughing, and yet with a certain rough kindness.

“Well, since it hath not killed you, methinks I am safe,” Richard laughed back gratefully, while one of his comrades dressed the wound, which gave promise of speedy healing.

“What is your name?” he asked of the corporal.

“James Colborn, of the King’s Artillery.”

“Well, ’tis a pity you are in such bad employ, for you have an uncommon good heart and a face that matches it. When General Washington hath licked the boots off you fellows, come down South and pay me a visit. My mother’ll be so grateful for every kind word you have spoken to me, that she’ll feed you on good cookery until you are as fat as a Michaelmas goose.”

“I’ll come,” the other laughed, “but I’ll wear my boots; it will be you fellows who will go barefooted from a licking.”

“Do not wager your birthright on that; you’d lose even the mess of pottage.”

Under the relief the dressing of his wound afforded Richard fell asleep, and his dreams must have been comforting, for on his face was a smile of happiness, and the words he murmured made the corporal of the guard laugh to himself as he trod to and fro before the open tent.

“Have you a favorite dog named Joscelyn?” he asked teasingly, when he roused Richard for his supper.

“No.”

“A horse, then?”