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# THE SILER CITY GRIT

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By GRACE E. CRAIG.

Charity May stepped briskly to and fro before the spinning-wheel which she had brought out to the door-stone of the gray farm-house on the hill. Occasionally she lifted her brown eyes from her work and gazed out over the rolling pastures of the fair island of Prudence or across the strip of bay to the Rhode Island shore.

"This is a fine day, Polly," she said at length, to the small girl who sat beside her sewing. "I think, perhaps, mother will let us go out in the boat when our work is finished."

"Oh, Charity! Does she think she will?" chirped little Polly, in her excitement taking rather longer stitches than usual. "I'll be beautiful on the bay this morning."

Charity studied the sea and sky intently. "There's very little breeze stirring," she replied. "I'm almost sure mother will say we may go for a while if we do our work particularly well. Take care of those stitches, Polly. The last ones had best come out. They will never earn their count, but more like an extra long psalm."

Polly pouted, but in a moment laughed and pulled out the offending stitches, crooning softly to herself as she set them again with great care. Charity worked with a will, and her task was soon finished. She disappeared into the house, and in a few moments her voice rang merrily through the open door.

"Mother says 'yes,' Pollykins. Put up thy work for to-day."

Sweet Mother May followed her elder daughter to the door, and gazed longingly after the two young figures.

Though Charity was Polly's senior by five years, the sisters were loving comrades. They were both very happy when their brother Ben built for them a boat. It was a rough craft but staunch and seaworthy. Charity had strong young arms, and soon became expert with the oars, and even eight-year-old Polly quickly learned to pull away gallantly.

This morning the boat lay on the sand where Ben had left it after a fishing trip the day before. Polly, with a joyful gurgle, climbed in, and took her seat in the stern. Charity pushed off with little difficulty, and they were soon floating on the wide bosom of Narragansett Bay. On this August morning the warm, blue haze made all distant points vague and indistinct. Presently Charity dropped her oars and sat still with clasped hands, and even Polly for once was quiet, as the little boat drifted with the ebbing tide down toward Newport and the ocean.

"The French ships sailed out yesterday to meet Admiral Howe's squadron at sea, so father was telling Ben last night," Charity said at last, breaking the long silence. "How can men fight and kill each other in this lovely summer weather?"

"Oh, Charity! Do they really do such dreadful things? Does that think it can be really true?" and Polly lifted a horrified face from the water, in which she had been dabbling her dimpled fingers liberally bespattering her gray gown and white kerchief.

"I fear it is, lambkin," her sister answered with a shadow for a moment in her dark eyes. "Ben said he heard firing over in Portsmouth when he was out fishing yesterday."

A puff of wind coming over the water made Charity look up suddenly at the sun.

"The past noonday, sis," she said, "and we are a long way from home. We must start at once or mother will worry."

Hastily picking up her oars she turned the boat away from the near-by Portsmouth shore, and headed for Prudence Island. As she settled herself for the long pull homeward, something on a point of land directly in front of her caught her eye. She held her oars suspended and looked again.

"That must be a signal of distress, yonder," she finally said to her sister. "Turn about, Polly, and see what these can make of it."

Polly screwed her body around, and gazed with wide, blue eyes.

"I see naught but a rag tied to a stick," she said. "How these frightened me, Charity!"

"Yes, but why should a rag be tied to a stick on that lonely point? Some poor creature must be in trouble. We will go and see."

"But, Charity," objected the little girl. "This lonely fere, as these says. Some one may hurt us. And then, too, 'tis growing late, and the wind is rising. The bay to all white rimes now. If we don't get home soon, it shall be feared."

"Don't fear, little one," Charity roothed, "later will take care of thee. Sit still now. We will be only a few moments, and then if we both row I think we can get home before three."

And she turned the boat again towards Portsmouth.

Once on shore, she hesitated. Was she taking her little sister into peril?

"Would thee rather sit in the boat and wait for Charity?" she asked.

"No, no," and Polly scrambled hastily out and caught her hand. "I'll

not be left. I will go with thee. We will take care of each other."

The two girls climbed the slope to the summit of a knoll, and there, a few feet away, was the little staff with its pinnal banner. They threaded their way through the tangle of bushes, stopping now and then to look and listen. All about the bayberry and sweet-fern had been crushed and trampled as by heavy feet, but nothing broke the stillness of the summer noontide save the bees buzzing over the flowers and the cricket chirping in the grass.

"There must have been a skirmish here yesterday," Charity said. "Suddenly she stumbled and almost fell over something, and stopped with an exclamation. There, in the shelter of a thicket of bayberry, lay a man in the uniform of a British officer."

Polly crouched to her sister and began to cry loudly.

"At the sound of her weeping the man moved slightly, and opened his eyes.

"Hush, little one," Charity whispered. "He cannot harm thee. He is badly injured. His leg is broken, I think."

"At her sister's assurance, Polly took courage and stopped crying.



"Limping Painfully, He Made His Way to the Beach."

Coming closer, she examined admiringly the scarlet coat with its trappings of gold. To the little Quaker lass, who had never before seen anything but sober garments, it seemed wonderful indeed.

"But it was Charity's turn to look distressed.

"We must get him into the boat and take him home at once," she said.

"But how, Charity? He looks heavy," and Polly surveyed the prostrate man doubtfully.

"I don't know," answered her sister, "but we must find a way," and she gently touched the gold-braided sleeve. Again the soldier opened his eyes. Suddenly he made a weak effort to rise.

"Can these not move a little way now, if we help thee?" Charity asked, looking out a bit anxiously across the wide strip of water to Prudence Island. A fresh westerly wind had sprung up, and Polly's "white ruffles" of an hour ago had become whole caps now.

Once more the soldier endeavored to rise, and this time, with the girl's help, succeeded.

"If these can only get down to our boat," Charity urged, "we can take thee home, and then mother will care for thee."

"Come, poor soldier," Polly echoed. "Dear mother will make thee quite well."

A smile crossed the officer's pain-drawn face.

"Bless your dear heart, pretty one," he said.

Limping painfully with the stiffened leg dragging, he made his way to the beach, Charity just behind him, supporting him when he stopped to rest, and Polly by his side patting his red sleeve when she felt he needed encouragement. The man's breath came in gasps, but he smiled at his rescuers.

"Good little Samaritans," he whispered.

Suddenly Polly cried out, "Oh, Charity! Look, there's a storm coming!"

Sure enough. Over the high shoulder of Prudence Island, great masses of purple clouds were rolling eastward. The wind was increasing almost to a gale, too. One of the sudden, violent storms of the region was approaching.

"We must get home before it breaks," Charity spoke calmly, but for a moment her heartbeats quickened. "There is no shelter hereabouts."

Making a last, supreme effort the soldier rolled into the boat and faintly.

"Never mind him, Polly," Charity

commanded. "These must take the other pair of oars and pull for dear life."

A low growl of thunder in the west served to turn Polly's attention from their wounded passenger. She caught up her oars and rowed like the brave little woman she was.

"What time does thee think it is, Charity?" she inquired once.

"After three a good bit," her sister answered.

"Mother will be worrying," the little girl said, with a slight shiver.

"Yes, mother will be worrying," her sister repeated, looking over her shoulder at the approaching clouds. She fully realized what Polly only felt, that they were in a perilous position.

Wind and tide were both against them, but they made good progress for some little time. The young man at their feet moaned now and then and moved uneasily, but the two rowers pulled steadily on.

"Mother will care for him, once we reach home," Charity said, looking back again at the clouds, which had now rolled over the sun.

It grew suddenly dark on the bay, the wind died away slowly and the sea became oily. In the lull the rowers paused to rest. Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning rent the darkened sky, followed by a crashing peal of thunder. The girls in the boat sat motionless, petrified with terror. For a blinding, deafening moment, sea and sky seemed to meet. Then the squall shrieked down upon them in all its fury.

Charity's cap blew off, and her dark hair waved wildly about her face, but she flung the whole weight of her slender body upon the oars, pulling valiantly, and shouting through the din for Polly to do the same. One moment of hesitation on the part of either would have caused

scene of the combat, and when the British retreated to the city, was left unnoticed in his place of refuge under the bushes. Next day, he succeeded in dragging himself nearer the shore and holding a signal of distress, a bit of his shirt-sleeve tied to a stick.

The young soldier improved steadily under the kindly care of the Quakers, and soon was able to limp down-stairs, and often joined the children in their favorite working-place on the old door-stone. He proved a merry companion, telling many stories of his home across the sea, the old red manor-house among the great oak-trees, where his mother lived with his little sister Marjory, whom he declared Charity strongly resembled. Polly rejoiced greatly when he once more donned the beautiful red and gold coat.

"It is so gay," she said, patting it often. "I do like it."

"Dear heart! its wearer cried one day, catching her up, 'I believe you are a little earnest. I think you would really change your pesonal gray for warlike red. Is it not so?'"

"Yes," and Polly struggled to be free. "I would. Does thee not think I could be as good a girl in a red coat as in a gray one?"

"Perhaps," he answered gravely; "but certainly you could not be a braver little maid."

At last the day came for Father May to take Major Grantham over to Newport, where he was to sail for England with his regiment, and two very sorrowful little lasses in white caps and kerchiefs watched their father's boat out of sight.

They missed their friend sadly and they had not forgotten him, when, in the early spring, a boat came up from Newport bringing letters and a large box which had just arrived from over the sea. The letters were from the major and his mother, thanking the Mays once more for their kindness to the wounded "redcoat," praising the bravery of the little girls, and begging that the family accept the contents of the box with the heartfelt gratitude of the Granthams. Marjory sent many loving messages to Charity.

When the great box was opened, wonderful treasures were disclosed, beautiful things such as the simple New England Friends had seldom seen. Books for Father May and the boys, the linen and delicate china for the mother, some heavy silver spoons for Charity's dowry-chest.

"Just like Marjory's," the letters said, and, down in the very bottom something red. As Mother May drew it out, Polly began to dance.

"For me!" she cried, "is it not mother dear?"

Her mother looked at the label a little doubtfully, and then suddenly smiled, as she saw her little girl's shining face. In another moment Polly was shaking out before the admiring eyes of the family a beautiful, long, scarlet cloak.

"May I wear it, mother? Will thee not say I may?" she begged.

And Mother May, wise woman that she was, still smiling, answered gently, "Thee may wear it sometimes, my dear."

And Polly did wear it until the Friends in Providence City heard of the frivolous red cloak down on Prudence Island, and sent a stern letter of remonstrance to Mother May. Then it was laid carefully away and has been kept safely through many, many years, and Polly's great, great, grandchildren treasure it still as a memento of their little Revolutionary ancestress.

When the French ships had been lured from Newport harbor by the

appearance of Admiral Howe's fleet, the British troops had marched out of the city, and succeeded in driving the Americans from the island, though not without severe loss. In the battle on the downs, he, Sir Hugh Grantham, major in His Majesty's Sixty-third Foot Regiment, met with an accident. His horse was shot, and fell instantly, pinning him beneath its body, and injuring his right leg. He with difficulty crawled away from the

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FRANCIS SCOTT KEY.

## FIGHT WITH BANK ROBBERS

Latter Escape Shots of Citizens and Take \$3500.

State Senator Hewitt, President of the Bank at Locke, N. Y. Flees a Dozen Shots Without Effect.

Locke, N. Y.—In a fight to capture burglars who blew open the safe and secured \$3500 in money of the City Bank, State Senator C. J. Hewitt, president of the bank, exchanged about a dozen shots with the robbers, but they escaped, none of the shots taking effect. The robbers kept up a revolver fire, keeping back every one in their path until they reached the cover of the woods.

The first explosion in the bank occurred at 10 o'clock. A man, who the robbers kept up the fire, while one of their numbers was rifling the safe. The thieves gained entrance to the bank by forcing the front door.

Lonc Hand's Feet.

Fort Worth, Tex.—In true frontier style a highwayman, described as gentlemanly in appearance, robbed the branch banking house of the Waggoner Bank and Trust Company, in the heart of Fort Worth, of \$1000, and some assets, escaped in an automobile.

The robbery was the most daring attempted in Texas in years. Walter B. King, the cashier, was alone in the bank after closing time, finishing the business of the day, when a man walked in. As the man approached the window of the cashier's desk King looked into the barrel of a revolver.

"Make a move or a noise of any kind and I'll kill you," was the greeting. King received a bullet in the back of the head, covering King with the revolver. King ran to the telephone as he saw the man walking down the street and mingling with the crowds with an air of unconcern.

The police reacted the scene five minutes later, but the robber had disappeared.

Green Bay, Wis.—Two armed bandits entered the night office of the United States Express Company here at 2 o'clock in the morning and compelled the man in charge to open the