

**UNDER GREENE'S
BANNER, OR, THE
BOY HEROES OF 1781**

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Under Greene's banner, or, The boy heroes of 1781 by T. C. Harbaugh

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T. C. HARBAUGH

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BY

T. C. HARBAUGH

AUTHOR OF

"In Buff and Blue," "The Tory Plot," "Washington's
Young Spy," etc.



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Under Green's Banner

UNDER GREENE'S BANNER.

CHAPTER I.

CAPT. SAMSON MEETS HIS MATCH.

"What would I do if I had the power, eh? There wouldn't be a live rebel in the Carolinas. I'd make the trees bear the strangest fruit they ever bore. King George has been too lenient with his rebellious subjects. They deserve death, every mother's son of them! I wish he would give me power to chastise them."

"I'm afraid you'd need a larger army than Lord Cornwallis has."

"What's that, boy? You're one of 'em, I suppose."

"Just as you please, Capt. Samson."

Capt. Samson, who was known as one of the Tory leaders of the Carolinas, a big, brutal-looking man, six feet in his heavy boots, which were heavily slashed with mud, threw a look of withering hatred and scorn at the youthful speaker. It was seldom anyone deigned to cross him, and he felt the stroke.

"Why don't you take service under your Gen.

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Greene, who runs away from Lord Cornwallis like a rabbit from a hound? You're old enough to hang, by George! you are!"

There was no immediate response to this savage taunt.

The youth, who was operating the pole of a blacksmith's bellows in a little smithy on Rocky Creek in North Carolina, a stream that ran between the upper Peedee and the Catawba, bent to his work, but he did not take his eye from Capt. Samson.

"I don't know but what I may," he said at last.

"The sooner you go the better. We'll have rope enough left when it's needed for you."

The little group in the smithy looked at one another and feared for Rodney Black, the boy. They admonished him with their looks to curb his tongue while arguing with Capt. Samson, but he did not seem to fear the bitter partisan.

Old Jackson, the blacksmith, continued to beat out the horseshoe on the anvil, bending to his work with zeal, for he feared the Tory legion led by Capt. Samson.

Moreover, he was old, and had a family to support, though it was known that he was a rebel at heart and had performed some good work for the cause in the making of sabers for Marion and his men, who averred that better weapons were never put into the hands of the defenders of freedom.

The shoe was for the Tory's horse, which stood champing his bit at the door under a large tree. The home of the blacksmith stood near the shop, and standing in the doorway from which she could hear the voices was Jackson's niece, a fair young girl of nineteen, the belle of the district, and one whose heart was with Rodney, the boy apprentice.

She recognized Capt. Samson's vociferous tones, for she had heard his invectives on other occasions, and she longed for the time when the big fellow should fall into the hands of Marion or Hugar.

It was a long day when the Tory leader dropped a quarrel of his own making.

"Drop your work and go to Greene!" he snapped, returning to the altercation with Rodney. "By the way, I like to slap insolent little rebels."

He advanced across the dirt floor of the shop, and his eyes fairly blazed.

Rodney watched him closely, and worked the bellows.

He was a stout built boy of sixteen, and his muscles, owing to his occupation, had become as steel.

"You had better not," his eyes said.

"I don't take insolence. I wouldn't if it came from the rebel Washington!" continued the Tory.

By this time he was face to face with the young partisan. His great hand, which had helped more than

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one patriot into eternity, was lifted in mid air and his face grew dark with passion.

Seeing that the man really meant to carry out his threat, Rodney dropped the bellows pole and stepped aside. It was a quick move on his part, and the next moment he stood erect, holding in his hands a hammer that leaned against the anvil block.

He looked like a person brought to bay, and his tense muscles told that he would defend his honor to the last extremity.

"Going to show fight, eh?" laughed the captain. "That's just what I like!"

"I'll defend myself, as everyone should."

"But you won't strike me with that weapon?"

"That's for you to find out."

Capt. Samson seemed to retract his hastiness, but he was not of the kind to retreat.

"Put it down!" he cried. "Throw it down, I say!"

Rodney did not obey. That was the last thing he intended to do.

"I'll give you half a minute, and, if at the end of that time you menace me with that hammer, I'll leave my mark on your face."

"You can try it, sir."

"I can, eh? By George! I'll accept the challenge, so here goes!"

With this he executed a sudden movement forward and his arm shot out toward the patriot boy.