

**A GREAT TREASON: A
STORY OF THE WAR OF
INDEPENDENCE, VOL. I**

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A Great Treason: A Story of the War of Independence, Vol. I by Mary A. M. Marks

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MARY A. M. MARKS

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A GREAT TREASON

A Story of the War of Independence 1

BY

MARY A. M. HOPPUS Marks

... And some to shame
and everlasting con-
tempt.

VOL. I.

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A GREAT TREASON.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAIR AMERICAN.

Now, afore heaven, 'tis shame such wrongs are borne.

KING RICHARD II.

"By the Lord will, Ma'am, in five minutes more we shall be in Massachusetts Bay."

It was about noon of the 15th of December in the year of grace 1773, and the snow, *Fair American*, Captain Eliphalet Ward, with a cargo of hemp and three passengers, was just off Cape Cod. The low sandhills were half veiled in a light-gray mist, which drifted down with the wind. The Captain declared he could make out Cape Ann; but though the passengers did their best, all they could honestly say they saw was a darker patch on a bank of gray. As the afternoon wore on, a white streak could be seen here and there; the Captain said these were lighthouses, and grinned when Miss Digby compared them to so many statues of Lot's wife.

All the passengers were on deck, and had been there (except when they went below to dinner) since early morning. They were thirty-five days out, and had not seen land for a month, and even a sandbank was worth looking at. So they stood in a little group by the taffrail, straining their eyes, and anxiously watching the wind—a shrewd north-wester, which, as Miss Digby said, seemed to blow thither straight from the North Pole. She said this to a very young man, who was standing next her—as indeed he usually did.

He had a handsome dark face and a shapely figure; and as he turned to reply, there was a mixture of softness and haughtiness observable in his manner, very far removed from provincial rudeness, and even perhaps belonging to an earlier time than the eighteenth century.

"I am sorry that we must come into port against the wind," he said; "but this inhospitable breeze blows from Boston. You shall be welcomed less roughly if you will visit my native province of Virginia."

"Don't you say nothin' agin Boston, Mr. Branhholm," said the Captain, who was passing. "Boston's the heart and the mouth of the Colonies. She's all real grit, she is,—and you'll see that the wind that blows from Boston will set every weather-cock from New Hampshire right away down to Georgia."

"I hope not, Captain," said a tall young man, with very light blue eyes and a fair face, which the cold had only made more ruddy. "I hope the example of disobedience and rebellion to His Gracious Majesty——"

"Disobedience and rebellion, sir?" cried the Captain, his long lean Yankee face all awork. "We want our rights and liberties, sir! Liberties assured to us by a dozen charters! Look you, Lieutenant, some of our fathers fled away hither across the seas from the tyranny of kings and bishops—all of 'em bore the burden and heat of the day. They found this country a wilderness, given over to the cruel and treacherous heathen; they have turned a great part of it into flourishing colonies, even as the garden of the Lord. We *made* this country, sir! And now, shall we tamely sit by and see our commerce cramped and fettered, and our prosperity destroyed, to swell the British revenues? I tell you, Lieutenant Digby, our ruin is meant! They have us every way. First——" here the Captain grew more excited still, and slapped his thigh at each emphatic word, "first, there was the Stamp Act. Then we must pay duty in specie—to drain us of our ready money, and leave us helpless——"

"The money was all to be spent in the defence of the Colony," interrupted the Lieutenant.

"A pretty defence!" cried Eliphalet Ward. "You hindered us defending ourselves, and you sent us a stubborn fool, who stuck fast in the mud till Benjamin Franklin got him out, and was cut to pieces with his army, through his own ignorant folly. Our officers was thrust aside by impudent jackanapes that never saw an Injun in all their born days, and had no more notion how to tackle one nor they had how to treat free Colonists. And the very money that was to pay these mighty defenders was to be shipped off to Britain and back again! Shall I tell ye why, Mr Digby? Because, sir, money's like

honey—ef you let it run thro' a sieve, a lot of it's sure to stick. That's why it was, Mr. Digby. Ef it hadn't of been for that, the troops could ha' been paid right off out o' the duties."

"Well," said young Digby, with a slight swagger—excusable in a very young man, whose courage and obstinacy outweighed his reason—"I don't know all the ins and outs of the case, of course; but I know that 'tis always easy for a few plausible sedition-mongers to make out a story to suit their own ends, and persuade those who wish to believe it that they're monstrous ill-used—"

"Persuade 'em! Make out a story!" cried the Captain. "By heaven, Mr. Digby, this is too much! You say you don't know the ins and outs—no, I rayther reckon as you don't! Do you know, sir, that there's been nine-and-twenty laws made against our New England industries! Air you aware, sir, that we have been forbid to use the waterfalls that God gave us to be used for the service of man? Or to erect machinery? or set up looms? or work wood or iron? Look 'es here, Lef-tenant Digby, I'm a-speakin' o' what I *know*—you're a-speakin', by you're own showing, o' what you *think*. My father lived down in Maine, sir," continued the Captain, less angrily, but no whit less earnestly; "and when I was a little chap, no higher nor Miss there's apurn-strings, he's took me by the hand and led me into the forests, and pinte'd out one tree after another with the King's broad arzer on it, rotting away, Mr. Digby, rotting away. There was a hunderd pound fine on whoever touched one o' them 'ere trees with the broad arzer on 'em, sir, an' yet, there warn't one in a hunderd—~~one~~ in a hunderd!—there warn't one in ten hunderd, as was ever cut down for the King's use! You mark my words, Mr. Digby—the day'll come, sir, an' some o' this generation'll live to see it, when the woodman's axe shall sound on those trees in the forests o' Maine, none darin' to gainsay him. Ah! there's no forests in the world like the forests o' Maine," he said in a much gentler tone, as though the remembrance had touched him deeply. "When I'm at sea, I often fancy I can smell the scent o' the pines, same as I smelt 'em when I was a little chap, and went toddlin' after father."

"I don't suppose though, Captain," said Lieutenant Digby—who had really listened with considerable patience to this rhodomontade of a merchant-skipper, "I don't suppose you seriously mean to say as you could get on without us?"